

NIA
THE
E P I S T L E S
O F
PLINY THE YOUNGER.

Translated from the Original LATIN.

With EXPLANATORY NOTES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

PLINY was born at Comum, now called *Como*, in the duchy of Milan, in Italy, in the reign of Nero, about the 81st year of Rome, and the 62^d of the Christian æra. As to the time of his death, antiquity has given us no information: but it is conjectured, that he died either a little before, or soon after that most excellent emperor Trajan; that is, about the year of Christ 116.

“Pliny,” says Mr Melmoth, “may be considered in these epistles as writing his own memoirs. Every epistle is a kind of historical sketch, wherein we have a view of him in some striking attitude, either of active or contemplative life. And if that were his real design in their publication, he could not, it must be confessed, have taken a more agreeable, nor, perhaps, a more modest method of transcribing himself to posterity. To enter therefore into a detail concerning him, would be only anticipating the author himself, and amusing the reader with a copy, while the original stands before him.

“The elegance of this author’s manner, adds force to the most interesting, at the same time that it enlivens the most common subjects. But the polite and spirited turn of these epistles, is by no means their principal recommendation: they receive a much higher value, as they exhibit one of the most amiable and animating characters in all antiquity. PLINY’s whole life seems to have been employed in the exercise of every generous and social affection. To forward modest merit, to encourage ingenious talents, to vindicate oppressed innocence, are some of the glorious purposes to which he devoted his power, his fortune, and his abilities. But how does he rise in our esteem

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and admiration, when we see him exercising, with a grace that discovers his humanity as well as his politeness, the noblest acts both of public and private munificence, not so much from the abundance of his wealth, as the wisdom of his economy !”

“PLINY,” says the Earl of Orrery, “is a most singular instance of that primitive simplicity, that integrity of manners, and that sweetness of disposition, which must render a man amiable to his contemporaries, and honoured and admired by all posterity. He passed the earlier part of his life in sanguinary, suspicious, unsettled times ; and he afterwards filled employments of the highest dignity and power. The latter situation was no less dangerous than the former. It was open to all the blasts of envy, rancour, and revenge : yet, by the uprightness of his heart, the excellence of his genius, and the exactness of his prudence, joined to that proper humility, which is neither basely servile, nor secretly ambitious, he rode through the storm in great triumph, boldly, prosperously, and unhurt. His most threatening hazards proceeded from his strict friendships, and firm affections to all those whom he honoured with his esteem, or admitted to his bosom. The sincerity of his nature made his actions ever accompany his promises. He was true to his professions, and pertinacious in his good offices ; never to be alarmed by perilous difficulties, never to be wearied by labour or opposition.

“He was one of the best, and one of the greatest men that any age has produced ; second to none in virtue, equal to most in accomplishments ; of high birth by his ancestors, but much more ennobled by himself. In the various stations of private life, he discharged every duty with piety and exactness ; he was an affectionate, endearing husband, an unalterable and a courageous friend ;

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friend ; to his servants, a tender and careful master ; to his associates, an easy, and often a facetious companion ; grave without severity, witty without ill-nature, open without imprudence ; a splendid original, whom few can copy, but whom all ought to imitate. And if we examine him in his public character, as a statesman, and as first minister to Trajan, he will be acknowledged one of those rare spirits, who seem allotted by heaven as blessings upon earth. The due course and impartial administration of the law, the glory of the commonwealth, the interest and prosperity of the emperor, were the moving springs to all his actions, and the sole end of his most secret designs. His views neither centered in himself, nor in his own family ; they were dilated universally, and took in the whole. He was equally the faithful servant of the empire, of the people, and of the prince. He was indefatigable in business, and immoveable in patriotism : threats could not alarm him ; bribes could not allure him. Thus, above fear, and above temptation, he became a shield to his fellow-citizens, an ornament to the republic, and a support to the emperor. He was an elegant scholar, an excellent philosopher, and a powerful orator ; the patron and example of those arts and sciences which he cultivated and admired. His abilities were only to be exceeded by his candour and integrity ; so that, among the most celebrated names of antiquity, scarce any character will be found adequate to **PLINY**. He was not absolutely void of resentment, which perhaps he has carried too far in the case of **Marcus Aquilius Regulus**, for whose misfortune, in the death of an only son, he seems to have less pity, than he discovers upon any other occasion.

“ He is not, however, without his blemishes,” adds Lord Orrery. “ The critics determine his style in general to be too concise, and have discovered

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covered in him great marks of vanity and affectation. There is, I confess, some foundation for such censures; his metaphors indeed frequently want uniformity, and are sometimes inconsistent. But his beauties, both in literature and morals, far outweigh all his defects."

Of the several works of **PLINY**, none have reached our times, except his *Epistles*, and his *Panegyric on the Emperor Trajan*.

The following translation of the *Epistles* has been chiefly copied from *Melmoth*, but with very considerable alterations in many places. A few *epistles* are taken from the *Earl of Orrery's* version. The notes are extracted mostly from those of *Melmoth*.

The merit of the work is humbly submitted to the public; and the publisher cannot but think he has done an acceptable service to his countrymen, in giving them a neat and correct edition of this celebrated author's *Epistles*, at almost half the price of either *Melmoth's* or *Lord Orrery's* translations.

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Epist. I. PLINY to SEPTITIUS.

YOU have often pressed me to make a select collection of such letters as I have written with any degree of accuracy, and give them to the public. I have accordingly collected them, not indeed in their proper order of time, for I was not compiling a history; but just as they happened to come to my hands. And now what remains but to wish that neither you may have occasion to repent of your advice, nor I of my compliance? the consequence

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of which will be, that I may probably inquire after the letters which at present lie neglected, and preserve those I shall hereafter write. Farewell.

Epist. II. PLINY to ARRIANUS.

SINCE I foresee your journey hither is likely to be retarded, I therefore send you the book which I promised in my former letter, begging you would, as usual, revise and correct it. I desire this the more earnestly, as I never, I think, wrote in the same style in any of my former compositions; for I have endeavoured to imitate Demosthenes who was always your favourite, and Calvus who is lately become mine. When I say so, I mean only with respect to their manner; for to catch their sublime spirit, is given alone to the inspired few. My subject indeed seemed naturally to lead me to this (may I venture to call it?) emulation, as it was, in general, of such a nature as demanded all the thunder of eloquence, even to a degree sufficient to have awakened (if in truth it is possible to awake) that indolence in which I have long reposed. I have not however neglected the softer graces of my favourite Tully, where-ever I could with propriety step out of my direct road to enjoy a more flowery path: for it was warmth, not austerity, at which I aimed. I would not have you imagine by this, that I am bespeaking your favour: on the contrary, to induce you to exercise the utmost severity of your criticism, I will confess, that neither my friends nor myself are averse to the publication of this piece, if you should join with us in giving the same partial vote in its favour. The truth is, as I must publish something, I wish (and it is the wish, I confess, of indolence) it might be this performance rather than

than any other, merely because it is already finished. At all events, however, something I must publish, and for many reasons; chiefly, because the tracts which I have already sent into the world, though they have long since lost all their recommendation from novelty, are still, I am told, in request; if, after all, the booksellers do not flatter me. And let them, since by that innocent deceit I am excited to pursue my studies. Farewell.

Epist. III. PLINY TO CANINIUS RUFUS.

WHat passes at * Comum, that favourite scene of yours and mine? What becomes of the pleasant villa, the vernal portico, the shady plane-tree walk, the crystal canal so agreeably winding along its flowery banks, together with the charming † lake below, so well adapted to the purposes of use and beauty? What have you to tell me of the firm yet soft ‡ Gestatio, the sunny bath, the public saloon, the private dining-room, and all the elegant apartments for repose both at || noon and night? Do these enjoy my friend, and divide his time with pleasing vicissitude? Or do the affairs of the world, as usual, call you frequently out from this agreeable

* The city where Pliny was born: it still subsists, and is now called *Como*, situated upon the lake Larius, or *Lago di Como*, in the duchy of Milan.

† The lake Larius, upon the banks of which this villa was situated.

‡ A piece of ground set apart for the purpose of exercise, either on horseback, or in their vehicles; it was generally contiguous to their gardens, and laid out in the form of a circus.

|| It was customary among the Romans to sleep in the middle of the day, and they had apartments for that purpose distinct from their bedchambers.

retreat? If the scene of your enjoyments lies wholly there, you are happy: if not, you are under the common error of mankind. But leave, my friend, (for certainly it is high time), the sordid pursuits of life to others, and devote yourself, in this calm and undisturbed recess, entirely to pleasures of the studious kind. Let these employ your idle as well as serious hours; let them be at once your business and your amusement, the subjects of your waking and even sleeping thoughts: produce something that shall be really and for ever your own. All your other possessions will pass on from one master to another: this alone, when once it is yours, will for ever be so. As I well know the temper and genius of him to whom I am addressing myself, I must exhort you to think as well of your abilities as they deserve: do justice to those excellent talents you possess, and the world, believe me, will certainly do so too. Farewell.

Epist. IV. PLINY to POMPEIA CELERINA.

YOU might observe from my last short letter, I had no occasion of yours to inform me of the various conveniencies you enjoy at your several villas. The elegant accommodations which are to be found at * Narnia, † Otriculum, ‡ Carsola, || Perugia, particularly the pretty bath at Narnia, I am extremely well acquainted with. The truth is, I have a property in every thing which belongs to you; and I know of no other difference between your house and my own, than

* Now called Narni, a city in Umbria, in the duchy of Spoleto.

† Otricoli in the same duchy.

‡ Carsola in the same duchy.

|| Perugia, in Tuscany.

that

that I more carefully attended in the former than the latter. You may, perhaps, have occasion to make the same observation in your turn, whenever you shall give me your company here; which I wish for, not only that you may partake of mine with the same ease and freedom that I do of yours, but to awaken the industry of my domestics, who are grown something careless in their attendance upon me. A long course of mild treatment is apt to wear out the impressions of awe in servants; whereas new faces quicken their diligence, as they are generally more inclined to please their master by attention to his guest, than to himself. Farewell.

Epist. V. PLINY to VOCONIUS ROMANUS.

DID you ever see a more abject and mean-spirited creature than Regulus has appeared since the death of Domitian, during whose reign his conduct was no less infamous, though more concealed than under Nero's? He has lately expressed some apprehensions of my resentment; as indeed he has reason; for I look upon him with the utmost indignation. He not only promoted the prosecution against Rusticus Arulenus, but exulted in his death; insomuch that he actually recited and published a libel upon his memory, wherein he styles him, *the Stoics ape*; adding, that "he was stigmated by the wound he received in the cause of Vitellius:" such is the strain of his noble eloquence! He fell so furiously upon the character of Herennius Senecio, who was capitally convicted upon the information of Metius Carus, that the latter said to him one day, *Pray what business have you with my dead men? Did I ever interfere in the affair of Cressus, or Camerinus?* These, you know, were victims to Regulus in Nero's time. For these reasons he

imagines I am highly exasperated, and therefore when he recited his last piece, did not give me an invitation. Besides, he has not forgot, it seems, the dangerous snare he once laid for me, when he and I were pleading before the * centumviri. Rusticus had desired me to be counsel for Arionilla, Timon's wife: Regulus was engaged against her. In the course of my defence I strongly insisted upon a decree which had been formerly made by the worthy Modestus, at that time banished by Domitian. Now you shall see Regulus in his true colours: "Pray," says he, "what are your sentiments of Modestus?" You will easily judge how extremely hazardous it would have been to have answered in his favour, and how infamous if I had done otherwise. But some guardian power, I am persuaded, assisted me in this emergency. "I would tell you my sentiments," said I, "if that were a matter for the consideration of the centumviri." Still he repeated his question. I replied, "It was not customary to examine witnesses to the character of a man after sentence had passed upon him." He pressed me a third time: "I do not inquire," said he, "what you think of Modestus in general, I only ask your opinion of his loyalty." "Since you will have

* A select body of men who formed a court of judicature, called the centumviral court. Their jurisdiction extended chiefly, if not entirely, to questions concerning wills and intestates estates; for though Tully, in his first book de Oratore, enumerates other points which came in question before them, yet Pitiſcus is of opinion (and with great probability), that in latter times their business was singly confined to the cases first mentioned. Their number, as appears by our author, amounted to 180.

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“my sentiments then,” I returned, “I think it illegal even to ask a question concerning a person who stands convicted.” This silenced him; and I was universally applauded and congratulated, that without wounding my character by an advantageous, perhaps, though ungenerous answer, I had not entangled myself in so insidious a snare. Regulus, conscious of this unworthy treatment, has solicited Cæcilius Celer, and Fabius Justus, to use their interest to bring about a reconciliation between us. And lest this should not be sufficient, he has applied also to Spurrinna for the same purpose; to whom he came in the humblest manner, (for he is the most abject creature living, where he has any thing to fear), and intreated him to call upon me very early the next morning, and endeavour by any means to soften my resentment; “for,” says he, “I can no longer support myself under this anxiety of mind.” Accordingly I was awakened the following day with a message from Spurrinna, informing me that he would wait upon me. I sent word back, I would call upon him; however, both of us setting out to pay this visit, we met under Livia’s portico. He acquainted me with the commission he had received from Regulus, and interceded for him, as became so worthy a man in behalf of one of a very different character, without greatly pressing the thing. I ought not, I told him, to conceal the true state of the case from him, and after I had informed him of that, I would leave it to himself to consider what answer was proper for me to return. “I cannot positively,” said I, “determine any thing till Mauricus * (who was then in exile) shall return, by whose sentiments I think myself

* Brother to Rusticus Arulenus, who had been put to death upon the information of this Regulus.

— obliged

“obliged to be entirely guided in this affair.” A few days after Regulus met me as I was attending upon the prætor, and calling me aside, said, he was afraid I deeply resented an expression he had once made use of in his reply to me and Satrius Rufus, before the centumviri, to this purpose: *Rufus and that other, who affects to rival Tully, and to despise the eloquence of our age.* I answered, that now indeed I perceived he spoke it with a sneer, since he owned he meant it so; otherwise it might have passed for a compliment. I was free to own, I said, that I endeavoured to imitate Cicero, and was by no means contented with taking my example from modern eloquence: for I looked upon it as a very absurd thing not to copy the best models of every kind. But “how happens it,” continued I, “that you who remember so well what passed upon this occasion, should have forgot that other, when you pushed me so strongly concerning the loyalty of Modestus?” Confounded with this unexpected question, pale as he always is, he turned still more remarkably so. After a good deal of hesitation, he said, it was not me at whom he aimed; it was only Modestus. Observe now, I beseech you, the implacable spirit of this fellow, who was not ashamed thus to confess himself capable of insulting the unfortunate. But the reason he gave in justification of this infamous proceeding, is pleasant. “He had wrote,” said he, “in a letter which was read to Domitian, that I was the most execrable of all scoundrels:” and what Modestus said, was the truth beyond all manner of controversy. Here, I think, I broke off the conversation, being desirous to reserve to myself the liberty of acting as I should see proper when Mauricus returns. It is no easy matter, I well know, to destroy Regulus; he is rich, and at the head of a party; there are many
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with whom he has credit, and more that are afraid of him: a passion that will sometimes prevail even beyond friendship itself. But after all, ties of this sort are not so strong, but they may be loosened; and the popularity of a bad man is more to be depended upon than he is himself. However, (to repeat it again), I shall do nothing in this affair till Mauricus returns. He is a man of sound judgment and great sagacity, formed upon a long course of experience, and who, from his observations on the past, well knows how to judge of the future. I shall consult with him, and think myself justified either in pursuing or dropping this affair, as he shall advise. In the mean while, I thought I owed this account to the friendship that subsists between us, which gives you an undoubted right to be informed, not only of all my actions, but all my designs. Farewell.

Epist. VI. PLINY to CORNELIUS TACITUS.

Certainly you will laugh (and reason you have) when I tell you that the man you know so well has taken three fine boars. Pliny! say you: Yes, Pliny. However, I indulged at the same time my beloved inactivity, and whilst I sat at my nets, you would have found me, not with my boarspear or javelin, but my pencil and pocket-book by my side. I mused and wrote, being resolved if I returned with my hands empty, at least to come home with my papers full. Believe me, this manner of studying is not to be despised: you cannot conceive how greatly exercise contributes to enliven the imagination. There is, besides, something in the solemnity of the venerable woods with which one is surrounded, together with that awful silence which is observed on these occasions,

sions, that strongly inclines the mind to meditation. For the future therefore let me advise you, whenever you hunt, to take along with you your pen and paper, as well as your basket and bottle : for be assured you will find Minerva as fond of traversing the hills as Diana. Farewell.

Epist. VII. PLINY to OCTAVIUS RUFUS.

SEE to what an eminence you have advanced me, by investing me with the same power and dominion which Homer attributes to his mighty Jove.

*Great Jove consents to half the chief's request,
But heav'n's eternal doom denies the rest.*

It is thus with a nod or a frown, I may grant or reject your petition as I see proper. To be serious : as I am at liberty, I think, to excuse myself to the * Bætici, especially at your request, from being counsel for them against a single person ; so on the other hand, to oppose a whole province which I have long since attached to me by many good offices, and spared no pains to oblige even at the hazard of my own interest, would be acting inconsistently with my honour, and that uniformity of conduct which I know you admire. I shall steer therefore in this affair a middle course, and of the alternative which you propose to me, chuse that which will satisfy your judgment, as well as your inclination. For I do not look upon myself obliged to consider so much what you at present desire, as what a man of your worthy character will always ap-

* The people of Bætica, a part of Spain comprehending Andalusia and Granada.

prove. I hope to be at Rome about the 15th of October, when we will join our united credit with Gallus in convincing him of the reasonableness of my offer. In the mean while you may assure him of my good disposition towards him :

*Then with his sable brow he gave the nod,
That seals his word, the sanction of a god **

For why should I not continue to quote Homer's verses, since you will not put it in my power to quote any of yours? which yet I so passionately wish for, that I question whether I could withstand such a bribe, even to plead against my old clients the good people of Bætica. — I had almost forgot to mention (what however is of too much importance to be omitted), that I have received the excellent dates you sent me. They are likely to prove very powerful rivals to my favourite figs and morells. Farewell.

*Epist. VIII. PLINY TO POMPEIUS SATURNI-
NUS.*

THE letter which I received from you, wherein you importuned me to communicate to you some of my writings, came very seasonably. I was at that very time designing to send you one. Your request therefore has accelerated the course of a very willing racer, and freed me from every thing that I had to apprehend either from your refusal of this trouble, or my scruples to give it you. Without hesitation I then make use of your offer; as you must now take the consequence of it without reluctance. But you must not expect from so indolent a man any new composition. On the contrary, I am going to intreat you to revise again the speech I made to

* Iliad. i. ver. 528.

my countrymen, when I dedicated the public library which I founded for their use. You have already, I remember, obliged me with some general observations upon this piece: but I now beg of you, not only to take a view of it in the whole, but distinctly to criticise it, with your usual exactness, in all its parts. When you have corrected it, I shall still be at liberty either to publish or suppress it. The delay in the mean time will be attended with one of these advantages, that while we are deliberating whether it is fit for the public view, a frequent revival will either make it so, or convince me that it is not. Though indeed the principal difficulty with me concerning the publication of this harangue, does not arise so much from the composition itself, as from the subject, which has something in it, I fear, that will look like ostentation. For though the style be ever so plain and unornamented, yet as the occasion necessarily led me to touch not only upon the munificence of my ancestors, but my own; my modesty will be greatly embarrassed. A dangerous and slippery situation this, even when one is led into it by the plea of necessity! For if mankind are not very favourable to panegyric, even when given us by others, how much more difficult is it to reconcile them to it when it is a tribute which we pay to ourselves? Virtue, though stripped of all external advantages, is generally the object of envy, but particularly so, when glory is her attendant; and the world is never so little disposed to wrest and pervert your honest actions, as when they pass unobserved and unapplauded. For these reasons I frequently ask myself, whether I should have composed this harangue, such as it is, merely for my own private use, or with a view also to the public? I am sensible, what may be exceedingly useful and proper in the prosecution of any
affair,

affair, may lose all its grace and fitness the moment the thing is completed: for instance, in the case before us, nothing could be more to my purpose than to explain at large the motives of my intended bounty; for by this means I accustomed my mind to generous sentiments; grew more enamoured of the lovely forms by frequent attention to them, and guarded at the same time against that repentance which usually attends a hasty execution of liberalities not well considered. There arose also a further advantage from this method, as it fixed in me a certain habitual contempt of money. For while mankind seem to be universally governed by an innate disposition to accumulate wealth, the cultivation of a more generous affection in my own breast taught me to free myself from the slavery of so predominant a principle, and I thought my honest intentions would be the more meritorious, as they should appear to proceed, not from a sudden start of temper, but from the dictates of cool and deliberate reflection. I considered, besides, the nature of my design; I was not engaging myself to establish public games, but a fund for the support of ingenuous youths. The pleasures of the senses are so far from wanting the oratorical arts to recommend them, that we stand in need of all the powers of eloquence, to moderate and restrain their influence. But to prevail with those who are capable of the office, to undertake with cheerfulness the disagreeable business of education, it is necessary to apply, in the most artful manner, not only to their interest, but their passions. And if physicians find it expedient to use the most insinuating address in recommending to their patients a wholesome, though perhaps unpleasant regimen; how much more occasion had he to exert all the powers of persuasion, who, out of regard to the public welfare, was endeavouring

ing to reconcile it to a most useful, though not very popular benefaction: particularly, as my aim was to recommend an establishment calculated singly for the benefit of those who were parents, to such as were not so; and to persuade many, that they would patiently wait for, and endeavour to deserve an honour, of which, at present, a few only could partake. But as at that time, when I attempted to explain and enforce the design and benefit of my institution, I considered more the general good of my countrymen, than any reputation which might arise to myself; so I am apprehensive if I publish that piece, it will seem as if I had a view rather to my own character, than the benefit of others. I am very sensible how much nobler it is to place the reward of virtue in the silent approbation of one's own breast, than in the applause of the world. Glory ought to be the consequence, not the motive of our actions; and though fame should sometimes happen not to attend the worthy deed, yet is it by no means the less amiable for having missed the applause it deserved. But the world is apt to suspect that those who celebrate their own generous acts, do not extol them because they performed them, but performed them that they might have the pleasure of extolling them. Thus the splendour of an action which would have shone out in full lustre if related by another, vanishes and dies away when it becomes the subject of your own applause. Such is the disposition of mankind, if they cannot blast the action, they will censure the vanity; and whether you do what does not deserve to be taken notice of, or take notice yourself of what does, either way you incur reproach. In my own case there is a peculiar circumstance that weighs with me: this speech was pronounced, not
before

before the people, but the * decurii; not in the forum, but the senate; I doubt therefore it will appear inconsistent that I, who, when I delivered it, seemed to endeavour to avoid popular applause, should now, by publishing this performance, appear to court the approbation of the world: that I, who was so scrupulous as not to admit even those persons to be present when I pronounced this discourse, who were interested in my benefaction, lest it might be suspected I was actuated in this affair by any ambitious views, should now seem to solicit admiration, by forwardly displaying it to such as have no other concern in my munificence than the benefit of example. These are the scruples which have occasioned my delaying to give this piece to the public; but I submit them entirely to your judgment, which I shall ever esteem as a sufficient reason for my conduct. Farewell.

Epist. IX. PLINY to MINUTIUS FUNDANUS.

IT is strange, that the manner of passing our time at Rome, every single day we stay there, either is, or at least seems to be reasonable enough; and yet, upon casting up the whole sum, the amount will appear quite the contrary. For example, Ask any one how he has been employed to-day? he will tell you perhaps, "I have been at the ceremony of taking up the manly † robe; this friend invited me to a wed-

* The decurii were a sort of senators in the municipal or corporate cities of Italy.

† The Roman youths at the age of seventeen changed their habit, and took up the *toga virilis*, or *manly gown*, upon which occasion they were conducted by the friends of the family with great ceremony either into the forum or capitol, and there invested with this new robe.

“ding; that desired me to attend the hearing of
 “his cause; one begged me to be witness to his
 “will; another called me to a consultation.”
 These are offices which seem, while one is en-
 gaged in them, extremely necessary; and yet,
 when, in the quiet of some retirement, we look
 back upon the many hours thus employed, we
 cannot but condemn them as solemn impertinen-
 ces. At such a season one is apt to reflect, *How*
much of my life has been spent in trifles! at least it
 is a reflection which frequently comes across me
 at Laurentum, after I have been employing my-
 self in my studies, or even in the necessary care
 of the animal machine; (for the body must be
 repaired and supported, if we would preserve the
 mind in all its vigour.) In that peaceful retreat,
 I neither hear nor speak any thing of which
 I have occasion to repent. I suffer none to re-
 peat to me the whispers of malice; nor do I
 censure any man, unless myself, when I am dis-
 satisfied with my compositions. There I live un-
 disturbed by rumour, and free from the anxious
 sollicitudes of hope or fear, conversing only with
 myself and my books. True and genuine life!
 pleasing and honourable repose! More, perhaps,
 to be desired than the noblest employments!
 Thou solemn sea and solitary shore, best and
 most retired scene for contemplation, with how
 many noble thoughts have you inspired me!
 Snatch then, my friend, as I have, the first occa-
 sion of leaving the noisy town with all its very
 empty pursuits, and devote your days to study,
 or even resign them to ease: for, as my ingenious
 friend Attilius pleasantly said, “It is better to
 “do nothing, than to be doing of nothing.”
 Farewell.

Epist.

Epist. X. PLINY TO ATRIUS CLEMENS.

IF ever polite learning flourished in our city, it is certainly now in its brightest lustre. There are numerous and eminent instances of it. I will content myself with naming only one, Euphrates the philosopher. I first became acquainted with this excellent person in my youth, when I served in the army in Syria. I had an opportunity of conversing with him familiarly, and took some pains to gain his affection: though that indeed was nothing difficult, for he is exceeding open to access, and full of that humanity which he professes. I should think myself extremely happy if I had as much answered the expectations he at that time conceived of me, as he exceeds every thing I had imagined of him. But perhaps I admire his excellencies more now, than I did then, because I understand them better, if I can with truth say I understand them yet. For as none but those who are skilled in painting, statuary, or the plastic art, can form a right judgment of any performance in those sciences; so a man must himself have made great advances in learning, before he is capable of forming a just notion of the learned. However, as far as I am qualified to determine, Euphrates is possessed of so many shining talents, that he cannot fail to strike the most injudicious observer. He reasons with much force, penetration, and elegance, and frequently lanches out into all the sublime and luxuriant eloquence of Plato. His style is rich and flowing, and at the same time so wonderfully sweet, that with a pleasing violence he forces the attention of the most unwilling hearer. His outward appearance is agreeable to all the rest: he has a good shape, a comely aspect, long hair, and a large white beard: circumstances.

cumstances which, though they may probably be thought trifling and accidental, contribute however to gain him much reverence. There is an affected negligence in his habit; his countenance is grave, but not austere; and his approach commands respect without creating awe. Distinguished as he is by the sanctity of his manners, he is no less so by his polite and affable address. He points his eloquence against the vices, not the persons of mankind, and without chastising reclaims the wanderer. His exhortations so captivate your attention, that you hang as it were upon his lips; and even after the heart is convinced, the ear still wishes to listen to the harmonious reasoner. His family consists of three children, (two of which are sons), whom he educates with the utmost care. His father-in law Pompeius Julianus, as he greatly distinguished himself in every other part of his life, so particularly in this, that though he was himself of the highest rank in his province, yet, among many considerable competitors for his daughter, he preferred Euphrates, as first in merit, though not in dignity. But to dwell any longer upon the virtues of a man whose conversation I am so unfortunate as not to have leisure to enjoy, what would it avail but to increase my uneasiness that I cannot enjoy it? My time is wholly taken up in the execution of a very honourable indeed, but very troublesome employment; in hearing of causes, answering petitions, passing accounts, and writing of letters; but letters, alas! where genius has no share. I sometimes complain to Euphrates (for I have leisure at least for that) of these unpleasant occupations. He endeavours to comfort me, by affirming, that to be engaged in the service of the public, to hear and determine causes, to explain the laws, and administer justice, is a part, and the not least part too,
of

of philosophy, as it is reducing to practice what her professors teach in speculation. It may be so : but that it is as agreeable as to spend whole days in attending to his useful conversation, — even his rhetoric will never be able to convince me. I cannot therefore but strongly recommend it to you, who have leisure, the next time you come to Rome, (and you will come, I dare say, so much the sooner), to take the benefit of his elegant and refined instructions. I am not, you see, in the number of those who envy others the happiness they cannot share themselves : on the contrary, it is a very sensible pleasure to me, when I find my friends in possession of an enjoyment from which I have the misfortune to be excluded. Farewell.

Epist. XI. PLINY to FABIVS JUSTVS.

IT is a long time since I received a letter from you. You will allege, perhaps, you have nothing to write : but let me have the satisfaction at least of seeing it under your hand, or tell me in the good old style, *If you are well, I am so*. I shall be contented even with that ; as indeed that single circumstance from a friend includes every thing. You may possibly think I jest : but believe me I am extremely in earnest. In short, all I desire is, to know how it is with you ; for I can no longer remain in this ignorance without the utmost anxiety. Farewell.

Epist. XII. PLINY to CALESTRIVS TYRO.

I Have suffered a most afflicting loss, if the misfortune of being deprived of so excellent a man may be expressed by that word. Corellius Rufus is dead ! and dead too by his own act ! a galling aggravation to my affliction, as that sort
of

of death which we cannot impute either to the course of nature, or the hand of Providence, is of all others the most to be lamented. It affords some consolation in the loss of those friends whom disease snatches from us, that they fall by the general fate of mankind: but those who destroy themselves leave us under the inconsolable reflection that they had it in their power to have lived longer. It is true, Corellius had many inducements to be fond of life; a blameless conscience, high reputation, and great dignity, together with all the tender endearments of a wife, a daughter, a grandson, and sisters, and amidst these considerable pledges of happiness, many and faithful friends. Still it must be owned he had the highest reason (which to a wise man will always have the force of the strongest obligation) to determine him in this resolution. He had long laboured under so tedious and painful a distemper, that even these blessings, great and valuable as they are, could not balance the evils he suffered. In his thirty-third year, (as I have frequently heard him say), he was seized with the gout in his feet. This he received from his father; for diseases, as well as possessions, are sometimes transmitted by a kind of inheritance. A life of abstinence and virtue had something broke the force of this distemper while he had strength and youth to struggle with it; as a manly courage supported him under the increasing weight of it in his old age. I remember in the reign of Domitian, I made him a visit at his villa near Rome, where I found him under the most incredible and undeserved tortures; for the gout was not only in his feet, but had spread itself over his whole body. As soon as I entered his chamber, his servants withdrew: for it was his constant rule, never to suffer them to be present when any very intimate friend was with him: he even carried it so far as to dismiss his wife

wife upon such occasions, though worthy of the highest confidence. Looking round about him, "Do you know," says he, "why I endure life under these cruel agonies? It is with the hope that I may outlive, at least for one day, that villain. And O! ye gods, had you given me strength, as you have given me resolution, I would infallibly have that pleasure!" Heaven heard his prayer, and having survived that tyrant, and lived to see liberty restored, he broke through those great, but however now less forcible attachments to the world, since he could leave it in possession of security and freedom. His distemper increased; and as it now grew too violent to admit of any relief from temperance, he resolutely determined to put an end to its uninterrupted attacks by an effort of heroism. He had refused all sustenance for four days, when his wife Hispulla sent to me our common friend Geminius, with the melancholy news that he was resolved to die; and that she and her daughter having in vain joined in their most tender persuasions to divert him from his purpose, the only hope they had now left was my endeavours to reconcile him to life. I ran to his house with the utmost precipitation. As I approached it, I met a second messenger from Hispulla, who informed me there was nothing to be hoped for, even from me, as he now seemed more inflexible than ever in his resolution. What confirmed their fears was an expression he made use of to his physician, who pressed him to take some nourishment: "It is resolved," he said: an expression, which as it raised my admiration of his greatness of soul, so it does my grief for the loss of him. I am every moment reflecting what a valuable friend, what an excellent man I am deprived of. That he was arrived to his sixty-seventh year, which is an age even the strongest seldom exceed, I well know:

know: that he is delivered from a life of continual pain; that he left his family, and (what he loved even more) his country in a flourishing state; all this I know. Still I cannot forbear to weep for him as if he had been in the prime and vigour of his days: and I weep (shall I own my weakness?) upon a private account. For I have lost, oh! my friend, I have lost the witness, the guide, and the director of my life! And to confess to you what I did to Calvisius in the first transport of my grief, I sadly fear, now that I am no longer under his eye, I shall not keep so strict a guard over my conduct. Speak comfort to me therefore, I intreat you; not by telling me that *he was old, that he was infirm*; all this I know; but by supplying me with some arguments that are uncommon, and resistless, that neither the commerce of the world, nor the precepts of the philosophers can teach me. For all that I have heard, and all that I have read occur to me of their selves; but all these are by far too weak to support me under so heavy an affliction. Farewell.

Epist. XIII. PLINY to SOCIUS SENECEO.

THIS year has produced a most plentiful harvest of poets. Scarce a day has passed, during the whole month of April, wherein we have not been entertained with the recital of some poem. It is a pleasure to me to find, notwithstanding there seems to be so little disposition in the public to attend assemblies of this kind, that the sciences still flourish, and men of genius are not discouraged from producing their performances. It is visible, the greater part of the audience which is collected upon these occasions, come with reluctance; they loiter round the place of assembly, join in little parties of conversation, and

and send every now and then to inquire whether the author is come in, whether he has read the preface, or whether he has almost finished the piece. Then, with an air of the greatest indifference, they just look in and withdraw again; some by stealth, and others with less ceremony. It was not thus in the time of our ancestors. It is reported, that Claudius Cæsar one day hearing a noise near his palace, inquired the occasion of it, and being informed that Nonianus was reciting a composition of his, went immediately to the place, and agreeably surpris'd the author with his presence. But now, were one to bespeak the company even of the most idle man living, and remind him of the appointment ever so often, or ever so long beforehand, either he would avoid it under pretence of forgetfulness, or if not, would look upon it as so much time lost; and for no other reason, perhaps, but because he had not lost it. So much the rather do those authors deserve our encouragement and applause, who have resolution to persevere in their studies, and exhibit their performances, notwithstanding this indolence, or pride of their audience. For my own part, I scarce ever refuse to be present upon such occasions. Though to say truth, the authors have generally been my friends; as indeed there are few men of genius who are not. It is this has kept me in town longer than I intended. I am now however at liberty to withdraw to my retirement, and write something myself; but without any intentions of reciting in my turn. I would not have it thought that I rather lent than gave my attendance; for in these, as in all other good offices, the obligation ceases the moment you seem to expect a return. Farewell.

Epist.

Epist. XIV. PLINY to JUNIUS MAURICUS.

YOU ask me to look out for a husband, to whom you may give your niece: a task, in which you very rightly prefer me before all others. For you well know how I loved and honoured that excellent man her father. You well know by what encouragements he cherished my youth, and what praises he bestowed upon me at that time, to make me afterwards capable of deserving them. No command of yours to me could carry greater weight and pleasure with it: nor can I be engaged in a more honourable undertaking, than in chusing out some young man, from whom may descend grandsons and successors to Arulenus Rusticus. Such a man might be long sought after, if Minicius Acilianus did not present himself to my mind, born as it were for that purpose: he is some few years younger than I am, so that we live with the easy familiarity and affection of young people, and yet he reveres me as an experienced old man. He submits to be modelled and instructed by me, in the same manner as I have been by you, and your brother: his country is Brixia, in our part of Italy, which still retains and keeps up the modest, frugal, and plain manners of the ancients. His father is Minicius Macrinus, the head of the equestrian order, having always declined a higher station: for Vespasian offered to chuse him one of the prætors; but he was constant and firm in preferring virtuous retirement to such pursuits as ours, which I am in doubt whether to call ambition or dignity. His grandmother on his mother's side is Serrana Procula, a native of Padua. You know the manners of the place, but Serrana is an example of the strictest virtue even to the Paduans. His
uncle

uncle is P. Acilius, a man of singular authority, prudence, and integrity. In short, throughout the whole family you will find nothing but what will please you as much as in your own. As for Acilianus himself, he is a man of a strong constitution, indefatigable at business, and yet of an invincible modesty. He has passed through the several offices of quæstor, tribune, and prætor, with great honour, and so has saved you the trouble of soliciting those employments for him. His countenance is free and open, his complexion ruddy and healthful, his whole person beautiful and genteel, and his carriage graceful and senatorian. These are accomplishments by no means (according to my way of thinking) to be overlooked; but they are such as ought to be mentioned, as a reward due to a young lady's unblemished chastity. I do not know whether I should add, that his father is very rich. When I consider to whom I am pointing him out as a son-in-law, I think riches ought not to be mentioned; but when I reflect upon the prevailing customs of the times, and particularly upon the laws of our city, by which men are valued according to the value of their estates, certainly, in that view, riches are not to be omitted. Besides, when we look forward to a numerous posterity, and the many consequences of marriage, a good fortune is a very necessary ingredient. Perhaps you will imagine I have been indulging my partial fondness for Acilianus, and have strained the character beyond the truth: but, I give you my word, you will find hereafter, that every thing I have said, will admit of greater latitude, than I have taken. I love the young man entirely, and he deserves my affection. But still a religious part of that love is not to overload my friends with praises. Farewell.

Epist. XV. PLINY TO SEPTITIUS CLARUS.

WHat is the reason, my friend, that when you promised to sup with me, you have not performed your engagement? But take notice, justice is to be had, and you shall fully reimburse me the expense I was at to treat you; which was no inconsiderable sum. I had prepared, you must know, a lettuce apiece, three snails, two eggs, and a barley-cake, with some sweet wine and snow: the snow most certainly I shall charge to your account, as a rarity that will not keep. Besides all these curious dishes, there were olives of Andalusia, gourds, shallots, and a hundred other dainties equally sumptuous. You should likewise have been entertained either with an interlude, the rehearsal of a poem, or a piece of music, as you liked best; or (such was my liberality) with all three. But the luxurious delicacies and Spanish dancers of a certain — I know not who, were, it seems more to your taste. However, I shall have my revenge of you, depend upon it; — in what manner, shall at present be a secret. In good truth, it was not kind, thus to mortify your friend, I had almost said yourself; — and upon second thoughts I do say so: for how agreeably should we have spent the evening, in laughing, trifling, and deep speculation! You may sup, I confess, at many places more splendidly; but you can be treated no where, believe me, with more unconstrained cheerfulness, simplicity, and freedom: only make the experiment; and if you do not ever afterwards prefer my table to any other, never favour me with your company again. Farewell.

Epist.

Epist. XVI. PLINY TO ERUCIUS.

I Entertained a regard for my friend Pompeius Saturninus, and extolled his genius, even long before I knew how luxuriant, manageable, and extensive it was: but he has now taken full and unreserved possession of my whole heart. I have heard him in the unpremeditated, as well as studied speech, plead with no less warmth and energy, than grace and eloquence. He abounds with just reflections; his periods are graceful and majestic; his words harmonious, and stamped with the authority of genuine antiquity. These united qualities infinitely delight you, not only when you are carried along, if I may so say with the resistless flow of his charming and emphatical elocution; but when considered distinct and apart from that advantage. I am persuaded you will be of this opinion when you peruse his orations, and will not hesitate to place him in the same rank with the ancients, whom he so happily imitates. But you will view him with still higher pleasure in the character of an historian, where his style is at once concise and clear, smooth and sublime; and the same energy of expression, though with more closeness, runs through his harangues, which so eminently distinguishes and adorns his pleadings. But these are not all his excellencies; he has composed several poetical pieces in the manner of my favourite Calvus and Catullus: What strokes of wit, what sweetness of numbers, what pointed satire, and what touches of the tender passion appear in his verses! in the midst of which he sometimes designedly falls into an agreeable negligence in his metre, in imitation too of those admired poets. He read to me, the other day, some letters which he assured me were written by

his wife: I fancied I was hearing Plautus or Terence in prose. If they are that lady's, (as he positively affirms), or his own, which he absolutely denies, either way he deserves equal applause; whether for writing so politely himself, or for having so highly improved and refined the genius of his wife, whom he married young and uninstructed. His works are never out of my hands; and whether I sit down to write any thing myself, or to revise what I have already written, or am in a disposition to amuse myself, I constantly take up this agreeable author; and as often as I do so, he is still new. Let me strongly recommend him to the same degree of intimacy with you; nor be it any prejudice to his merit that he is a contemporary writer. Had he flourished in some distant age, not only his works, but the very pictures and statues of him would have been passionately inquired after; and shall we then, from a sort of satiety, and merely because he is present among us, suffer his talents to languish and fade away unhonoured and unadmired? It is surely a very perverse and envious disposition, to look with indifference upon a man worthy of the highest approbation, for no other reason but because we have it in our power to see him, and to converse with him, and not only to give him our applause, but to receive him into our friendship. Farewell.

Epiſt. XVII. PLINY TO CORNELIUS TITIANUS.

Virtue and acts of friendship are not yet extinct in the world; and there are still those who shew themselves friends even to the dead. Titianus Capito has obtained the emperor's permission to erect a statue in the forum to the late L. Syllanus. It is a noble and truly laudable exertion

exertion of princely favour, to employ it to purposes such as these, and to try the extent of one's interest for the glory of others. It is indeed habitual to Capito to distinguish merit. He has placed in his house (where he is at liberty to do so) the statues of the Bruti, the Cassi, and the Catos, and it is incredible what a religious veneration he pays them. But his generosity does not terminate here: there is scarce a name of any note or lustre that he has not celebrated and rendered more conspicuous, by his excellent verses. One may be very sure a man must be possessed of great virtue himself, who thus admires it in others. As Syllanus certainly deserves the honour that is done him, so Capito has by this means secured to himself that immortality which he has conferred on his friend; for in my opinion he who erects a statue in the Roman forum, receives as much glory, as the person to whom it is erected. Farewell.

Epist. XVIII. PLINY TO SÜETONIUS TRANQUILLUS.

YOU write me that you have been extremely terrified with a dream, as apprehending that it threatens some ill success to you in your law-suit; and therefore desire that I would get it put off for a few days, or at least to the next. This is a favour, you are sensible, not very easily obtained, but I will use all my interest for that purpose;

———*For dreams descend from Jove*.*

In the mean while it is very material † for you to recollect whether your dreams generally represent

* Pope, Iliad i. 63.

† Dreams were considered from the earliest antiquity.

present things as they afterwards fall out, or quite the reverse. But if I may judge of yours by one that happened to myself, you have nothing to fear; for it portends you will acquit yourself with great success. I had promised to be counsel for Julius Pastor; when I fancied in my sleep that my mother-in-law came to me, and throwing herself at my feet, earnestly intreated me not to be concerned in the cause. I was at that time a very young man; the case was to be argued in the four centumviral courts; my adversaries were some of the most considerable men in Rome, and particular favourites of Cæsar; any of which circumstances were sufficient, after such an inauspicious dream, to have discouraged me. Notwithstanding this, I engaged in the cause, reflecting within myself,

quity as sacred admonitions and hints of futurity. Many of the Heathen oracles were delivered in this manner, and even among the Jews we find several intimations conveyed to their prophets in the same way. The Romans in general were great observers of dreams, and Augustus Cæsar is said to have escaped a very imminent danger at the battle of Philippi, by quitting his tent in compliance with a dream of Antonius his physician. This is mentioned to obviate any prejudice against Pliny, which may arise in the mind of a reader unacquainted with the prevailing sentiments of the ancients upon this point, who might otherwise be surprised to find our author talk seriously upon a subject of this nature. The truth is, an eminent critic has observed with great good sense, there seems to be as much temerity in never giving credit to dreams, as there is superstition in always doing so. "It appears to me," says he, "that the true medium between these two extremes, is to treat them as we would a known liar; we are sure he most usually relates falsehoods; however, nothing hinders but he may sometimes speak truth."

Without

*Without a sign, his sword the brave man draws,
And asks no omen, but his country's cause.* :*

for I looked upon the promise I had given, to be as sacred to me as my country, or, if that were possible, more so. The event happened as I wished; and it was that very cause which first procured me the favourable attention of the public, and threw open to me the gates of Fame. Consider then whether your dream, like that which I have related, may not portend success. Or after all, perhaps, you will think it more safe to pursue this cautious maxim: "*Never do a thing of, which you are in doubt.*" if so, write me word. In the interval I will consider of some expedient, and endeavour your cause shall be heard any day you like best. In this respect you are in a better situation than I was: the court of the centumviri, where I was to plead, admits of no adjournment; whereas in that where your cause is to be heard, though it is not easy to procure one, still however it is possible. Farewell.

Epist. XIX. PLINY TO ROMANUS FIRMUS.

YOU are my countryman, my schoolfellow, and my companion from my earliest youth: there was the strictest friendship between my mother and uncle, and your father; a happiness which I also enjoyed as far as the great inequality of our ages would admit: can I fail then (biassed as I am towards your interest by so many strong and weighty reasons) to contribute all in my power to the advancement of your dignity? The rank you bear in our province as a decurio, is a proof that you are possessed at least of an hundred thousand sesterces; but that we may also have the pleasure of seeing you a Roman knight, give me

* Iliad xii. 243. POPE.

leave to present you with three hundred thousand, in order to make up the sum requisite to entitle you to that dignity. The long acquaintance we have had, leaves me no room to doubt you will ever be forgetful of this instance of my friendship. And I need not advise you (what, if I did not know your disposition, I should) to enjoy this honour with the modesty that becomes one who received it from me: for the dignity we possess by the good offices of a friend, is a kind of sacred trust, wherein we have *his* judgment, as well as our own character, to maintain, and therefore to be guarded with peculiar attention.

Epist. XX. PLINY TO CORNELIUS TACITUS.

I Have frequent disputes with a friend of mine, a person of knowledge and erudition, who admires nothing so much in the eloquence of the bar as conciseness. I agree with him, where the cause will admit of this manner, it may be properly enough pursued; but insist, that to omit what is material to be mentioned, or only slightly to touch upon those points which should be strongly inculcated, and urged home to the minds of the audience, is in effect to desert the cause one has undertaken. In many cases a copious manner of expression gives strength and weight to our ideas, which frequently make impressions upon the mind, as iron does upon solid bodies, rather by repeated strokes than a single blow. In answer to this he usually has recourse to authorities; and produces Lyfias amongst the Grecians, and Cato and the two Gracchi among our own countrymen, as instances in favour of the concise style. In return, I name Demosthenes, Æschines, Hesperides, and many others in opposition to Lyfias; while I confront Cato and the Gracchi, with Cæsar, Pollio, Cœlius, and above all Cicero, whose longest oration is generally esteemed

ed the best. It is in good compositions, as in every thing else that is valuable; the more there is of them, the better. You may observe in statues, basso-relievos, pictures, and the bodies of men, and even in animals and trees, that nothing is more graceful than magnitude, if accompanied with proportion. The same holds true in pleading: and even in books, a large volume carries something of beauty and authority in its very size. My antagonist, who is extremely dexterous at evading an argument, eludes all this, and much more which I usually urge to the same purpose, by insisting that those very persons, upon whose works I found my opinion, made considerable additions to their orations when they published them. This I deny: and appeal to the harangues of numberless orators; particularly to those of Cicero for Murena and Varenus, where he seems to have given us little more than the general charge. Whence it appears, that many things which he enlarged upon at the time he delivered those orations, were retrenched when he gave them to the public. The same excellent orator informs us, that, agreeably to the ancient custom which allowed only one counsel on a side, Cluentius had no other advocate but himself; and tells us farther, that he employed four whole days in defence of Cornelius: by which it plainly appears, that those orations which, when delivered at their full length, had necessarily taken up so much time at the bar, were greatly altered and abridged when he afterwards comprised them in a single volume, though, I must confess indeed, a large one. But it is objected, there is a wide difference between good pleading and just composition. This opinion, I acknowledge, has had some favourers, and it may be true; nevertheless I am persuaded, (though I may perhaps be mistaken), that, as it is possible a pleading may be well received by the audience,

audience, which has not merit enough to recommend it to the reader ; so a good oration cannot be a bad pleading : for the oration on paper is, in truth, the original and model of the speech that is to be pronounced. It is for this reason we find in many of the best orations extant, numberless expressions which have the air of unpremeditated discourse ; and this even where we are sure they were never spoken at all : as for instance in the following passage from the oration against Verres,—“ *A certain mechanic——what’s his name? Oh, I’m obliged to you for helping me to it: yes, I mean Polycletus.*” It cannot then be denied, that the nearer approach a speaker makes to the rules of just composition, the more perfect he will be in his art ; always supposing however, that he has the necessary indulgence in point of time : for if he be abridged of that, no imputation can justly be fixed upon the advocate, though certainly a very great one is chargeable upon the judge. The sense of the laws is, I am sure, on my side, which are by no means sparing of the orator’s time : it is not brevity, but an enlarged scope, a full attention to every thing material, which they recommend. And how is it possible for an advocate to acquit himself of that duty, unless in the most insignificant causes, if he affects to be concise ? Let me add what experience, that unerring guide, has taught me : it has frequently been my province to act both as an advocate and a judge, as I have often assisted as an assessor, where I have ever found the judgments of mankind are to be influenced by different applications, and that the slightest circumstances often produce the most important consequences. There is so vast a variety in the dispositions and understandings of men, that they seldom agree in their opinions about any one point in debate before them ; or if they do, it is generally from the
movement

movement of different passions. Besides, as every man naturally favours his own discoveries, and when he hears an argument made use of which had before occurred to himself, will certainly embrace it as extremely convincing, the orator therefore should so adapt himself to his audience as to throw out something to every one of them, that he may receive and approve as his own peculiar thought. I remember when Regulus and I were concerned together in a cause, he said to me, *You seem to think it necessary to insist upon every point; whereas I always take aim at my adversary's throat, and there I closely press him.* ('Tis true, he tenaciously holds whatever part he has once fixed upon; but the misfortune is, he is extremely apt to mistake the right place.) I answered, it might possibly happen that what he took for what he called the *throat*, was in reality some other part. As for me, said I, who do not pretend to direct my aim with so much certainty, I attack every part, and push at every opening; in short, to use a vulgar proverb, *I leave no stone unturned.* As in agriculture, it is not my vineyards, or my woods alone, but my fields also that I cultivate; and (to pursue the allusion) as I do not content myself with sowing those fields with only one kind of grain, but employ several different sorts; so, in my pleadings at the bar, I spread at large a variety of matter like so many different seeds, in order to reap from thence whatever may happen to it: for the disposition of your judges is as precarious and as little to be ascertained, as that of soils and seasons. I remember the comic writer Eupolis mentions it in praise of that excellent orator Pericles, that

*Softest persuasion sat upon his tongue,
And on his lips engaging sweetness hung;*

*Yet with a strength that fix'd upon the mind,
That forc'd its way, and left its sting behind.*

But could Pericles, without the richest variety of expression, and merely by force of the concise or the rapid style, or both together, (for they are extremely different), have exerted that *charm* and that *sting* of which the poet here speaks? To delight and to persuade requires time, and a great compass of language; and to leave a *sting* in the minds of his audience, is an effect not to be expected from an orator who slightly pushes, but from him, and him only, who thrusts home and deep. Another * comic poet, speaking of the same orator, says,

*His mighty words like Jove's own thunder roll;
Greece hears, and trembles to her inmost soul.*

But it is not the concise and the reserved, it is the copious, the majestic, and the sublime orator, who with the blaze and thunder of his eloquence hurries impetuously along, and bears down all before him. There is a just mean, I own, in every thing; but he equally deviates from that true mark, who falls short of it, as he who goes beyond it; he who confines himself in too narrow a compass, as he who lanches out with too great a latitude. Hence it is as common to hear our orators condemned for being too barren, as too luxuriant; for not reaching, as well as for overflowing the bounds of their subject. Both, no doubt, are equally distant from the proper medium; but with this difference however, that in the one the fault arises from an excess, in the other from a deficiency; an error which if it be not a sign of a more correct, yet it is certainly of a more exalted genius. When I say this, I

* Aristophanes.

would

would not be understood to approve that everlasting * talker mentioned in Homer, but that other † described in the following lines :

*But when he speaks, what elocution flows!
Soft as the fleeces of descending snows.*

Not but I extremely admire him ‡ too, of whom the poet says,

Few were his words, but wonderfully strong.

Yet if I were to chuse, I should clearly give the preference to the style resembling *winter snow*, that is, to the full and diffusive ; in short, to that pomp of eloquence which seems all heavenly and divine. But ('tis urged) the harangue of a more moderate length is most generally admired. It is so, I confess : but by whom ? By the indolent only ; and to fix the standard by the laziness and false delicacy of these, would surely be the highest absurdity. Were you to consult persons of this cast, they would tell you, not only that it is best to say little, but that it is best to say nothing.— Thus, my friend, I have laid before you my sentiments upon this subject, which I shall readily abandon, if I find they are not agreeable to yours. But if you should dissent from me, I beg you would communicate to me your reasons. For though I ought to yield in this case to your more enlightened judgment, yet in a point of such consequence, I had rather receive my conviction from the force of argument, than authority. If you should be of my opinion in this matter, a line or two from you in return, intimating your

* Therites, Iliad ii. 212.

† Ulysses, Iliad iii. 222.

‡ Menelaus, ibid.

concurrence, will be sufficient to confirm me in the justness of my sentiments. On the contrary, if you think me mistaken, I beg you would give me your objections at large. Yet has it not, think you, something of the air of bribery, to ask only a short letter if you agree with me; but enjoin you the trouble of a very long one, if you are of a contrary opinion? Farewell.

Epist. XXI. PLINY TO PATERNUS.

I Rely as much upon the strength of your judgment, as upon the goodness of your eyes: not because I think you excel in skill, (for I would not have you flatter yourself,) but because you equal me in it: which, it must be allowed, is saying a great deal in its favour. However, jesting apart, I like very well the appearance of the slaves which were purchased for me by your recommendation; all that I want farther, is to be satisfied of their behaviour; and for this I must depend upon their characters more than their countenances. Farewell.

Epist. XXII. PLINY TO CATILIUS SEVERUS.

I Have been detained a long time in town, under the most alarming apprehensions. Titus Aristo, whom I particularly love and admire, is fallen into a tedious and obstinate illness, which deeply affects me. Virtue, knowledge, and good sense shine out with so superior a lustre in this excellent man, that learning herself and every valuable endowment seems involved in the danger of his single person. How consummate is his knowledge both in the political and civil laws of his country! How thoroughly conversant is he in every branch of history and antiquity! There is no article of science, in short,
you

you would wish to be informed of, in which he is not skilled. As for my own part, whenever I would acquaint myself with any abstruse point of literature, I have recourse to him, as to one who supplies me with its most hidden treasures. What an amiable sincerity, what a noble dignity is there in his conversation! How humble, yet how graceful is his diffidence! Though he conceives at once every point in debate, yet he is as slow to decide, as he is quick to apprehend, calmly and deliberately weighing every opposite reason that is offered, and tracing it, with a most judicious penetration, from its source through all its remotest consequences. His diet is frugal; his dress plain; and whenever I enter his chamber, and view him upon his couch, I consider the scene before me as a true image of ancient simplicity, to which his illustrious mind reflects the noblest ornament. He places no part of his happiness in ostentation, but refers the whole of it to conscience; and seeks the reward of his virtue, not in the clamorous applauses of the world, but in the silent satisfaction which results from having acted well. In short, you will not easily find his equal even among our philosophers by profession. He frequents not the places of public disputations, nor idly amuses himself and others with vain and endless controversies. His nobler talents are exerted to more useful purposes; in the scenes of civil and active life. Many has he assisted with his interest, still more with his advice! But though he dedicates his time to the affairs of the world, he regulates his conduct by the precepts of the philosophers; and in the practice of temperance, piety, justice, and fortitude he has no superior. It is astonishing with what patience he bears his illness; how he struggles with pain, endures thirst, and quietly submits to the troublesome regimen necessary in

a raging fever. He lately called me, and a few more of his particular friends, to his bedside, and begged we would ask his physicians what turn they apprehended his distemper would take: that if they pronounced it incurable, he might voluntarily put an end to his life; but if there were hopes of a recovery, however tedious and difficult, he might wait the event with patience; for so much, he thought, was due to the tears and entreaties of his wife and daughter, and to the affectionate intercession of his friends, as not voluntarily to abandon our hopes, if in truth they were not entirely desperate. A resolution this, in my estimation, truly heroical, and worthy of the highest applause. Instances are frequent enough in the world, of rushing into the arms of death without reflection, and by a sort of blind impulse: but calmly and deliberately to weigh the reasons for life or death, and to be determined in our choice as either side of the scale prevails, is the mark of an uncommon and great mind. We have had the satisfaction of the opinion of his physicians in his favour; and may heaven give success to their art, and free me from this restless anxiety! If that should happily be the event, I shall immediately return to my favourite Laurentinum, or, in other words, to my books and studious retirement. At present, so much of my time and thoughts is employed in attendance upon my friend, and in my apprehensions for him, that I have neither leisure nor inclination for subjects of literature. Thus have I informed you of my fears, my wishes, and my intentions. Communicate to me, in your turn, but in a gayer style, an account not only of what you are and have been doing, but even of your future designs. It will be a very sensible consolation to me in this perplexity of mind, to be assured that yours is easy. Farewell.

Epist.

Epist. XXIII. PLINY to POMPEIUS FALCO.

YOU ask me, whether I think you can with decency plead as a lawyer during your tribunate? I should first know what are your sentiments of that office; whether you look upon it as a mere shadow of honour, and an empty title, or as a sacred and inviolable function, the exercise of which as no power can suspend, so neither ought the person himself who is invested with it? When I was myself in that post, (possibly I might be mistaken in supposing I was become of any importance, however upon the supposition that I really was), I entirely quitted the bar. I thought it unbecoming a magistrate, who, upon all occasions, had a right of precedency, and in whose presence every body is obliged to rise, to be seen standing, while all about him were seated: that he who has authority to impose silence on any man, should himself be directed when to be silent: that he, whom it is held impious to interrupt, should be exposed to the scurrilous liberties of bar-orators; which to chastise, would be thought a sort of insolence of office, and yet it would be weakness to overlook. I considered farther, the great difficulty I should be under if either side should happen to appeal to me as tribune, whether to interpose my authority, or, by a kind of resignation of it, to have acted in my private capacity. For these reasons I rather chose to be the tribune of all, than the advocate of a few. But with respect to you, (I repeat it again), the whole depends upon what your sentiments are of this office, and under what character you would chuse to appear; remembering always, that a wise man will take upon himself such only to which he is capable of acting up.

Epist. XXIV. PLINY to BEBIUS HISPANUS.

MY friend and guest Tranquillus has a mind to buy a small piece of land, of which, it is said, an acquaintance of yours intends to dispose. I beg you would endeavour he may have it upon reasonable terms: a circumstance which will add to his satisfaction in obtaining it. A dear bargain is always disagreeable, particularly, as it is a reflection upon the purchaser's judgment. There are several circumstances attending this little villa, which (supposing my friend has no objection to the price) are extremely suitable to his taste: the convenient distance from Rome, the goodness of the roads, the smallness of the building, and the very few acres of land around it, which is just enough to amuse, but not employ him. To a man of the studious turn that Tranquillus is, it is sufficient if he has but a small spot to relieve the mind and divert the eye, where he may saunter round his grounds, traverse his single walk, grow familiar with his two or three vines, and count his little plantations. I mention these particulars, to let you see how much he will be obliged to me, as I shall to you, if you can help him to the purchase of this little *box*, so agreeable to his taste, upon terms of which he shall have no occasion to repent. Farewell.

B O O K II.

Epist. I. PLINY to VOCONIUS ROMANUS.

THE Roman people have not for many years beheld so magnificent and solemn a spectacle, as was lately exhibited in the public funeral of that great man, the illustrious

ous and fortunate Verginius Rufus. He lived thirty years in the full enjoyment of the highest reputation; and as he had the satisfaction to see his actions celebrated by poets, and recorded by historians, he seems even to have anticipated his fame with posterity. He was thrice raised to the dignity of consul, that he who refused to be the first of princes, might at least be the highest of subjects. As he escaped the resentment of those emperors to whom his virtues had given umbrage, and even rendered him odious, and ended his days when this best of princes, this friend of mankind, was in quiet possession of the empire, it seems as if Providence had purposely preserved him to these times, that he might receive the honour of a public funeral. He arrived, in full tranquillity and universally revered, to the 84th year of his age, having enjoyed an uninterrupted state of health during his whole life, excepting only a paralytic disorder in his hands, which however was attended with no pain. His last sickness, indeed, was severe and tedious; but even the accident that occasioned it, added to his glory. As he was preparing to return his public acknowledgments to the emperor, who had raised him to the consulship, a large volume which he accidentally received at that time, too weighty for a feeble old man, slipped out of his hands. In hastily endeavouring to recover it, the pavement being extremely slippery, he fell down and broke his thigh-bone; which fracture, as it was unskilfully set at first, and having besides the infirmities of age to contend with, could never be brought to unite again. The funeral obsequies paid to the memory of this great man, have done honour to the Emperor, to the present age, and even to eloquence herself. The consul Cornelius Tacitus pronounced his funeral oration: for the series of his felicities was crowned by the applause

applause of the most eloquent of orators. He died full of years and of glory, as illustrious by the honours he refused, as by those he accepted. Still, however, he will be missed and lamented by the world, as the bright model of a better age; especially by myself, who not only admired him as a patriot, but loved him as a friend. We were not only natives of the same province, and of neighbouring towns, but our estates were contiguous. Besides these accidental connections with him, he was also left guardian to me; and indeed he treated me with the affection of a parent. Whenever I offered myself a candidate for any employment, he constantly supported me with his interest; as in all the honours I have obtained, though he had long since renounced all offices of this nature, he would kindly give up the repose of his retirement, and come in person to solicit for me. At the time when it is customary for the priests to nominate such as they judge worthy to be received into their sacred office, he constantly proposed me. Even in his last sickness I received a distinguishing mark of his affection: being apprehensive he might be named one of the five commissioners appointed by the senate to reduce the public expenses, he fixed upon me, young as I am, to carry his excuses, in preference to so many other friends of superior age and dignity; and in a very obliging manner assured me, that had he a son of his own, he would nevertheless have employed me in that office. Have I not sufficient cause then to lament his death, as if it were immature, and thus pour out the fulness of my grief in the bosom of my friend? if indeed it be reasonable to grieve at all upon this occasion, or to esteem that event death, which to such a man is rather to be looked upon as the period of his mortality than the end of his life.

He

He lives, my friend, and will continue to live for ever; and his fame will spread farther, and be more celebrated by mankind, now that he is removed from their sight. — I had many other things to write to you, but my mind is so entirely taken up with this subject, that I cannot call it off to any other. *Verginius* is constantly in my thoughts; the vain but lively impressions of him are continually before my eyes, and I am for ever fondly imagining that I hear him, converse with him, and embrace him. There are, perhaps, and possibly hereafter will be, some few who may rival him in virtue; but not one, I am persuaded, that will ever equal him in glory. Farewell.

Epist. II. PLINY TO PAULINUS.

I Am in a rage; whether I have reason, is not quite so clear; but very angry I am. Love, you know, is sometimes unreasonable, often ungovernable, always jealous. The occasion of this my formidable wrath is great, you must allow, were it but just: yet taking it for granted that there is as much truth as weight in it, I am most vehemently enraged at your long silence. Would you soften my resentment? Let your letters for the future be very frequent, and very long; I shall excuse you upon no other terms; and as absence from Rome, or encouragement in business, is a plea I can by no means admit; so that of ill health, the gods, I hope, will not suffer you to allege. As for myself, I am enjoying at my villa the alternate pleasures of study and indolence; those happy privileges of retired leisure! Farewell.

Epist.

Epist. III. PLINY to NEPOS.

THE fame of Læus was very great, before he appeared among us ; but he is superior to all that was reported of him. His faculties, his powers, and his wit are inexhaustible ; and his unpremeditated discourses have as much propriety and elegance as if they had been long composed. He speaks the Greek language, or rather the genuine Attic. His exordiums are polite, easy, and harmonious ; and, when occasion requires, solemn and majestic. He gives his audience liberty to call for any question they please, and sometimes even to name what side of it he shall take ; when immediately he rises up in all the graceful attitude of an orator, and enters at once into his subject with surprising fluency. His reflections are solid, and clothed in the choicest expressions, which present themselves to him with the utmost facility. The ease and strength of his most unprepared discourses, plainly discovers he has been very conversant in the best authors, and much accustomed to compose himself. He opens his subject with great propriety ; his style is clear, his reasoning strong, his inferences just, and his figures graceful and sublime. In a word, he at once instructs, entertains, and affects you, and each in so high a degree, that you are at a loss to determine in which of those talents he most excels. His arguments are formed in all the strength and conciseness of the strictest logic : a point not very easy to attain ever in studied compositions. His memory is so extraordinary, that he will repeat what he has before spoke extempore, without losing a single word. This wonderful faculty he has acquired by great application and practice ; for his whole time is so devoted to subjects of
this

this nature, that he thinks and talks of nothing else. Though he is above sixty-three years of age, he still chuses to continue in this profession; than which, it must be owned, none abounds with men of more worth, simplicity, and integrity. We who are conversant in the real contentions of the bar, unavoidably contract a certain artfulness, however contrary to our natural tempers: but the business of the schools, as it turns merely upon matters of imagination, affords an employment as innocent as it is agreeable; and it must, methinks, be particularly so to those who are advanced in years; as nothing can be more desirable at that period of life, than to enjoy those reasonable pleasures, which are the most pleasing entertainments of our youth. I look therefore upon Isæus, not only as the most eloquent, but the most happy of men; as I shall esteem you the most insensible, if you appear to slight his acquaintance. Let me prevail with you then to come to Rome, if not upon my account, or any other, at least for the pleasure of hearing this extraordinary person. Do you remember to have read of a certain inhabitant of the city of Cadiz, who was so struck with the illustrious character of Livy, that he travelled to Rome on purpose to see that great genius; and, as soon as he had satisfied his curiosity, returned home again? A man must have a very inelegant, illiterate, and indolent, (I had almost said a very mean) turn of mind, not to think whatever relates to a science so entertaining, so noble, and so polite, worthy of his curiosity. You will tell me, perhaps, you have authors in your own study, equally eloquent. I allow it: and those authors you may turn over at any time, but you cannot always have an opportunity of hearing Isæus. Besides, we are infinitely more affected
with

with what we hear, than what we read. There is something in the voice, the countenance, the habit, and the gesture of the speaker, that concurs in fixing an impression upon the mind, and gives this method of instruction greatly the advantage of any thing one can receive from books. This at least was the opinion of Æschines, who having read to the Rhodians a speech of Demosthenes, which they loudly applauded; *but how*, said he, *would you have been affected, had you heard the orator himself thundering out this sublime harangue?* Æschines, if we may believe Demosthenes, had great dignity of utterance; yet, you see, he could not but confess it would have been a considerable advantage to the oration, if it had been pronounced by the author himself in all the pomp and energy of his powerful elocution. What I aim at by this, is, to persuade you to come and hear Isæus; and let me again entreat you to do so, if for no other reason, at least that you may have the pleasure to say, you once heard him. Farewell.

Epist. IV. PLINY to CALVINA.

HAD your father left several creditors, or indeed a single one except myself, it might have been a doubt whether you ought in prudence to enter upon his estate, which, considering its incumberances, might prove a burthen too heavy even for a man to undertake. But since, out of regard to the affinity that subsisted between us, I was contented to remain the only person unsatisfied who had any demand upon the estate, while other creditors, I will not say more troublesome, but certainly more cautious, were paid off: and as I contributed, you may remember, 100,000 sesterces towards
your

your marriage-portion, over and above the sum your father charged upon this estate for your fortune, which may be esteemed my gift too, as it was to be paid out of a fund which was before appropriated to me. — When you consider, I say, these instances of my friendship, you can want no assurance of my favourable disposition towards you. In confidence of which, you should not scruple to enter upon this inheritance, and by that means protect the memory of your father from the reproach of his dying insolvent. But that I may give you a more substantial encouragement to do so, than mere words, I entirely acquit you of the debt which he owed me. Do not scruple to receive this present at my hands, upon the supposition that I can ill spare so large a sum. It is true, my fortune is but moderate: the expenses which my station in the world requires are considerable; while the yearly income of my estate, from the nature and circumstances of it, is as uncertain as it is small; yet what I want in wealth, I make up by economy, the surest source that supplies my bounty. I must be cautious, no doubt, not to exhaust it by too much profusion; but it is a caution which I shall observe towards others: with respect to yourself, reason, I am sure, will justify my liberality, though it should exceed my usual bounds. Farewell.

Epist. V. PLINY to LUPERCUS.

THE piece which you have so often desired, and which I have as frequently promised, I now send you: but it is part of it only; the remainder I am still polishing. In the mean while, I thought there would be no impropriety in laying before you such parts as were most correct. I beg you would read it with the

same close attention that I wrote it; for I never was engaged in any work that required so much. In my other speeches, my diligence and integrity only were concerned; in this I had to manifest my patriotism. But while I dwelt with pleasure upon the honour of my native country, and endeavoured not only to support its rights, but heighten its glory; my oration swelled insensibly. However, I beg you would abridge it, even in those favourite topics, where-ever you find reason to do so; for when I consider the great delicacy of my readers, I am sensible the surest recommendation I can have to their favour, is by the shortness of the trouble I give them. But at the same time that I abandon my performance to your utmost severity in this instance, I must ask quarter for it in some others. Some consideration ought to be had to the taste of young people, especially where the subject admits of it. In view to this, I have given myself a latitude in the descriptions of places, which occur frequently in this performance; and have taken the liberty to treat them not only historically, but poetically. If any austere critic should take offence at this, and think it too florid for the gravity of this sort of compositions; the other parts of the oration will, I trust, satisfy his severity, and obtain indulgence for these gayer colourings. I have, indeed, endeavoured to gain my readers, by adapting my style to their different turns. And though I am afraid there are some passages that will displease particular persons, as not falling in with their peculiar taste; yet, upon the whole, its variety, I imagine, will recommend it in general: as at an elegant entertainment, though we do not, perhaps, taste of every dish, yet we admire the general disposition of the whole; and if we happen to meet with something not to our palate, we are not the less pleased

fed however with what is. I am not so vain as to pretend I have actually furnished out such an entertainment; I would be only understood to mean that I have attempted to do so. And possibly my attempt may not prove altogether fruitless, if you will exercise your skill upon what I now send you, and shall hereafter send. You will tell me, I know, that you can form no certain judgment till you see the whole. There is some truth in this, I confess: however, for the present you may acquaint yourself with this detached part, wherein you will find some things, perhaps, that will bear a separate examination. If you were to be shewn the head, or any other part of a statue, though you could not determine what proportion it bore to the entire figure, yet you would be able to judge of the elegance of that particular member. From what other principle is it that specimens of books are handed about, but that it is supposed the beauties of particular parts may be seen, without taking a view of the whole? — The pleasure I receive in conversing with you has carried me, I perceive, a greater length than I intended. But I stop here; for it is not reasonable that I, who am for setting bounds even to a speech, should set none to a letter. Farewell.

Epist. VI. PLINY to AVITUS.

IT would be too tedious, and of little importance, to tell you by what accident I (who am not over-apt to run into familiarities) supped lately with a person, who, in his own opinion, treated us with much splendour and œconomy; but, according to mine, in a sordid, yet expensive manner. Some very elegant dishes were served up to himself and a few more of the

company; while those which were placed before the rest were extremely mean. There were, in small quantities, three different sorts of wine; but you are not to suppose it was, that the guests might take their choice; on the contrary, that they might not chuse at all. The best was for himself and his friends of the first rank; the next for those of a lower order, (for, you must know, he measures out his friendship according to the degrees of quality); and the third for his own and his guests freed-men. One who sat near me took notice of this, and asked me how I approved of it? Not at all, I told him. Pray then, said he, what is your method on such occasions? Mine, I returned, is, to give all my company an equal reception; for when I make an invitation, it is in order to entertain, not to distinguish my company: I set every man upon a level with myself when I admit him to my table, not excepting even my freed-men, whom I look upon at those times to be my guests, as much as any of the others. At this he expressed some surprise, and asked me, if I did not find it a very expensive method? I assured him, not at all; and that the whole secret lay, in being contented to drink no better wine myself than I gave to them. And certainly, if a man is wise enough to moderate his own luxury, he will not find it so very chargeable a thing to entertain all his visitors in general, as he does himself. Refrain the delicacy of your own palate within proper bounds, if you would be an œconomist in good earnest. You will find temperance a much better method of saving expenses, than such reproachful distinctions. It were pity a young man of your excellent disposition should be imposed upon by the immoderate luxury which prevails at some tables, under the notion of frugality. And whenever any folly of this nature falls with-
in

in my observation, I shall, in consequence of that affection I bear you, point it out to you as an example which you ought to shun. Remember, therefore, nothing is more to be avoided than this modern conjunction of luxury and fordidness; qualities extremely odious when existing in distinct characters, but much more so where they meet together in the same person. Farewell.

Epist. VII. PLINY to MACRINUS.

Yesterday the senate decreed, on the motion of the Emperor, a triumphal statue to Vespasianus Spurrina: not as to many others who never were in an army, never saw a camp, or heard the sound of a trumpet, unless at the public diversions; but as to one who by his sweat, his wounds, and his heroism, has justly merited that honour. Spurrina, by the power of his arms, restored the king of the Bructeri to his throne; and this by a victory of all others the most noble; for he struck such a terror into that warlike people, that they submitted at the very first view of his troops. But at the same time that the senate rewarded him as a hero, they considered him as a father; and as a consolation to him for the loss of his son Cottius, who died during his absence upon that expedition, they voted likewise a statue to that excellent youth. A very unusual honour for one of his early years; but the services of the father well deserved it; and so severe a wound required an extraordinary application. Indeed Cottius himself gave so remarkable a specimen of the noblest qualities, that it is but reasonable his life, which had so short a period, should be extended, as it were, by this kind of immortality. The purity of his manners, and the gravity of his behaviour crea-

ted him such respect, that he well deserves to equal those venerable persons in honour, whom he rivalled in virtue: an honour, if I mistake not, conferred not only in memory of the deceased youth, and in consolation to the surviving father, but for the sake of public example. The young men of this age will be hence encouraged to cultivate every worthy principle, when they see such distinguishing rewards bestowed upon one of their own years; at the same time that men of quality will rejoice in having a numerous issue, while they may expect the satisfaction of leaving a worthy race behind, if their children survive them; or so glorious a consolation, if they survive their children.. For the sake of the public therefore I am glad that a statue is decreed to Cottius: and so indeed I am upon my own; for I loved this accomplished youth as ardently, as I now tenderly regret him. It will be a great satisfaction to me to see this figure every now and then as I pass by, and to stop sometimes to contemplate it. If there is a pleasure in looking upon the pictures of departed friends in our own house, how much more those public representations of them, which are not only memorials of their air and countenance, but of their glory and honour? Farewell.

Epist. VIII. PLINY TO CANINIUS.

ARE you employed in study? are you fishing? are you hunting? or do you unite both together, as you well may on the banks of our favourite Larius? For the lake affords fish; the woods that surround it, wild beasts; and the sequestered scene, sufficient solitude for study. Whether you are entertained with all, or any of these agreeable amusements, far be it that I should say I envy you; but I must confess, I greatly regret that I cannot

cannot partake of them too; a happiness I as earnestly long for, as a man in a fever does for drink to allay his thirst, or baths and fountains to assuage his heat. Shall I never break loose (if I may not disentangle myself) from these ties that thus closely withhold me? I doubt indeed, never: for new affairs are daily increasing, while yet the former remain unfinished: such an endless train of business rises upon me, and rivets my chains still faster! Farewell.

Epist. IX. PLINY to APOLLINARIS.

THE petition preferred by Sextus Erucius to the senate, makes me extremely anxious. I am overwhelmed with care, and I feel more uneasiness for my friend, whom I consider as my second self, than ever I did for myself. Besides, my credit, my character, and my dignity are in some measure at stake. I obtained for him of our emperor the honour of wearing the *laticlave*, and the office of *quæstor*; as it was by my interest that he was indulged with the privilege of petitioning for the tribunate; which if the senate should refuse him, I am afraid it will be thought I imposed upon the emperor. I must therefore, in support of my own character, endeavour, that the judgment of the public may confirm the opinion which Cæsar has conceived of him, by my representation. But if I were not obliged for these reasons to interest myself in the success of Erucius, yet his probity, good sense, and learning would incline me to assist him with my utmost power; as indeed he and his whole family are deserving of the highest applause. His father, Erucius Clarus, is a man of strict honour and ancient simplicity of manners; an able, eloquent, and experienced advocate, and defends every cause he undertakes, with a courage and integrity

ty equal to his great modesty. Septitius, his uncle, is one of the most plain, open, sincere, and candid men I ever knew. There is a friendly contention amongst them who shall shew me most affection; which I am persuaded they all give me in an equal degree. I have now an opportunity of obliging the whole family, in the single person of Erucius; for which purpose, I warmly solicit all my friends, go about to every place of public resort, and, in a word, exert my whole power and credit to serve him. I must beg of you likewise to take some share of this trouble with me; I will return you the same good office whenever you shall require it, and even without your request. As you have many friends, admirers, and dependents, it is but shewing yourself a wellwisher to Erucius in this affair, and numbers will be ready to second your inclinations. Farewell.

Epist. X. PLINY to OCTAVIUS.

O Thou obstinate, thou hard-hearted, nay thou most cruel man, thus to keep such excellent compositions so long buried! How long do you intend to deny us the pleasure of your verses, and yourself the glory of them? Suffer them, I entreat you, to come abroad, and to be admired; as admired they undoubtedly will be where-ever the Roman language is understood. The public, believe me, has long and earnestly expected them, and you ought not to disappoint or delay it any longer. Some few poems of yours have already, contrary to your inclinations indeed, broke their prison and escaped to light: these if you do not collect together, some person or other will claim the agreeable wanderers as their own. Remember, my friend, the mortality of human nature, and that there is nothing so likely

likely to preserve your name, as a monument of this kind; all others are as frail and perishable as the men whose memory they pretend to perpetuate. You will say, I suppose, as usual, Let my friends see to that. May you find many whose care, fidelity, and learning render them able and willing to undertake so considerable a charge! But surely it is not altogether prudent to expect from others, what a man will not do for himself. However, as to publishing of them, I will press you no farther; be that when you shall think proper. But let me, at least, prevail with you to recite them, that you may be more disposed to send them abroad; and may receive the satisfaction of that applause, which I will venture, upon very just grounds, to assure you of beforehand. I please myself with imagining the croud, the admiration, the applause, and even the silence that will attend you: for the silence of an audience, when it proceeds from an earnest desire of hearing, is as agreeable to me as the loudest approbation. Do not then, by this unreasonable reserve, defraud your labours any longer of a fruit so certain and so desirable: if you should, the world, I fear, will be apt to charge you with carelessness, and indolence, or, perhaps, with timidity. Farewell.

Epist. XI. PLINY to ARRIANUS.

IT is usually a pleasure to you, I know, to hear of any thing that is transacted in the senate, becoming the dignity of that august assembly: for though love of ease has called you into retirement, your heart still retains its zeal for the honour of the public. Accept then the following account of what lately passed in that venerable body: a transaction for ever memorable by its importance, and not only remarkable by the

the quality of the person concerned, but useful by the severity of the example. Marius Priscus, formerly proconsul of Africa, being impeached by that province, instead of entering upon his defence, petitioned that a commission of select judges might be appointed for his trial. Cornelius Tacitus and myself, being assigned by the senate counsel for that province, thought it our duty to inform the house, that the crimes alleged against Priscus, were of too atrocious a nature to fall within the cognisance of an inferior court: for he was charged with venality in the administration of justice, and even selling the lives of the innocent. Fronto Catus stood up in his favour, and moved that the whole inquiry might be confined to the single article of bribery; displaying upon this occasion all the force of that pathetic eloquence he is master of, in order to raise the compassion of the senate. The debates grew warm, and the members were much divided in their sentiments. Some were of opinion, that it was a matter which did not legally come under the inquiry of the senate: others, that the house was at liberty to proceed upon it, or not, as it saw proper; and that the method of bringing him to punishment ought to be as extraordinary as his crimes. At last Julius Ferox, the consul elect, a man of great worth and integrity, proposed that judges should be granted him provisionally, and in the mean while, that those persons should be proceeded against, to whom it was alleged he had sold innocent blood. Not only the majority of the senate gave into this opinion; but, after all the contention that had been raised, it was unanimously received. From whence I could not but observe, that sentiments of compassion, though they at first operate with great violence, subside at length, and give way to the cool dictates of reason and judgment: thus

thus it happens, that numbers will defend by joining in the general cry, what they would never calmly propose by themselves. The truth is, there is no discerning an object in a croud; one must take it aside, if one would view it in its true light. Vitellius Honoratus, and Flavius Marcianus, the persons who were ordered to be summoned, were brought before the house. Honoratus was charged with having given three hundred thousand sesterces to procure a sentence of banishment against a Roman knight, as also the capital conviction of seven of his friends. Against Marcianus it was alleged, that he gave seven hundred thousand, that another Roman knight might be condemned to suffer various tortures; which was accordingly executed, and the unhappy man was first whipped, afterwards sent to work in the mines, and at last strangled in prison. But the death of Honoratus prevented the justice of the senate upon him. Marcianus however appeared, but without Priscus. Tutius Cerealis, therefore, who had been formerly consul, thought proper to move, that Priscus, agreeably to his privilege as a senator, might have notice of what they were going upon: whether it was because he thought his being present would raise more compassion, or more resentment towards him; or because, as I am inclined to believe, he thought it most equitable, as the charge was against them both, so they should both join in the defence, and be acquitted or condemned together. The affair was adjourned to the next meeting of the senate, which was the most august and solemn I was ever present at. The emperor himself (for he was consul) presided. It happened likewise to be the month of January, a season remarkable upon many accounts, and particularly for the great number of senators it always brings together: moreover, the
importance

importance of the cause, the noise it had made in the world, the expectation that had been raised by the several adjournments, together with that innate disposition in mankind to acquaint themselves with every thing great and uncommon, drew the people together from all parts. Image to yourself the concern and anxiety we, who were to speak before such an awful assembly, and in the presence of the prince, must feel. I have often pleaded in the senate; as indeed there is no place where I am more favourably heard; yet, as if the scene had been entirely new to me, I found myself under an unusual fear upon this occasion. Besides, there was something in the circumstances of the person accused, which added considerably to the difficulties I laboured under: a man, once of consular dignity, and a member of the sacred college, now stood before me stripped of all his honours. It was a painful office, I thought, to accuse one who appeared already condemned; and for whom therefore, tho' his crimes were enormous, compassion took its turn, and seemed to plead in his behalf. However, I collected myself enough to begin my speech; and the applause I received, was equal to the fears I had suffered. I spoke almost five hours successively, (for they indulged me above an hour beyond the time at first allotted to me); and what at my first setting out had most contributed to raise my apprehensions, proved in the event greatly to my advantage. The goodness, the care of the emperor (I dare not say his anxiety) were so great towards me, that he frequently spoke to one of my attendants, who stood behind me, to desire me to spare myself; imagining I should exert my strength beyond what the weakness of my constitution would admit. Claudius Marcellinus replied in behalf of Marcianus. After which the assembly broke up till the next day;

day; for the evening coming on, there was not time to proceed farther. The next day, Salvius Liberalis, a very clear, artful, spirited, and eloquent orator, spoke in defence of Priscus: and he exerted all his talents upon this occasion. C. Tacitus replied to him with great eloquence, and a certain dignity which distinguishes all his speeches. Fronto Catus arose up a second time for Priscus, and, in a very fine speech, endeavoured, as indeed the case required, rather to soften the judges, than defend his client. The evening coming on, the senate proceeded no farther that day; but met the next, and entered upon the proofs. It was something very noble, and worthy of ancient Rome, to see the senate, adjourned only by the night, thus assemble for three days together. The excellent Cornutus Tertullus, consul elect, ever firm in the cause of truth, moved that Marius should pay into the treasury the 700,000 sesterces he had received, and be banished Italy. He was for extending the sentence still farther against Marcianus, and banishing him even Africa. He concluded with saying, that Tacitus and I having faithfully and diligently discharged the parts assigned to us, the senate declared, we had executed our trust to their satisfaction. The consuls elect, and those who had already enjoyed that office, agreed with Tertullus, except Pompeius: he proposed that Priscus should pay the seven hundred thousand sesterces into the treasury, but to suffer no other punishment than what had been already inflicted upon him for extortion: as for Marcianus, he was for having him banished for five years only. There was a large party for both opinions, and perhaps the majority secretly inclined to the milder sentence; for many of those who appeared at first to agree with Tertullus, seemed afterwards to join with Pompeius. But, upon a division of the

house, all those who stood near the consuls, went over to the side of Tertullus. Pompeius's party observing this, deserted him, and went over too; so that he was extremely exasperated against those who had urged him to this vote, particularly against Regulus, whom he upbraided for abandoning of him in a step, which he himself had advised. There is, indeed, such an inconsistency in the general character of Regulus, that he is at once both bold and timorous. Thus ended this important trial; but there remains a considerable part of the business still behind. It is concerning Hostilius Firminus, lieutenant to Marius Priscus, who is strongly charged with being an accomplice with him: for it appears by the accounts of Marcianus, and by a speech which he made in an assembly of the people at Leptis, that he had exacted fifty thousand denarii of Marcianus; that he was otherwise accessory to the wicked administration of Priscus; and that he received ten thousand sesterces under the title of his perfumer; an office perfectly adapted to one of his effeminate delicacy. It was agreed, at the motion of Tertullus, to proceed against him, at the next meeting of the senate; for, either by accident or design, he was at this time absent.— Thus have I given you an account of what is doing in town. Let me know, in return, the news of the country; how your groves and your vineyards, your corn and your fine flocks of sheep flourish? In a word, if you do not send me a long letter, you must expect to be punished in your own way, and to receive from me, for the future, none but short ones. Farewell.

Epist. XII. PLINY TO ARRIANUS.

THE remainder of the public inquiry which I mentioned to you in my last letter concerning

cerning the affair of Marius Priscus, at last, I will not say completed as it ought, however it is finished. Firminus being brought before the senate, made such a sort of defence as a man generally does who is found guilty. The consuls elect were much divided what judgment to give. Cornutus Tertullus moved he should be expelled the senate: but Nerva, with wondrous acuteness! proposed, that he should be only declared for ever incapable of holding the office of proconsul: and this, as it had the appearance of a milder sentence, prevailed; though in truth it is of all others the most severe. For can any situation be more wretched, than to be obliged to undergo the fatigue of a member of the senate, at the same time that one is cut off from all hopes of enjoying those honours to which a senator is entitled? And after having received such an ignominy, were it not better to be for ever buried in retirement, than to be marked out by so conspicuous a station, to the view and scorn of the world? Besides, to consider this with respect to the public, what can be more unbecoming the majesty of the senate, than to suffer a person to retain a seat in that august assembly, after having been publicly censured by it? What can be more indecent than for the criminal to be ranked with his judges? for a man excluded the proconsulship, because he behaved infamously as a lieutenant, to sit in judgment upon proconsuls? for one proved guilty of extortion, to condemn or acquit others of the like crimes? Yet these reflections, it seems, made no impression upon the majority. Votes go by number, not weight; nor can it be otherwise in assemblies of this kind, where nothing is more unequal than that equality which prevails in them; for though every member has the same right of suffrage, every member has not the same strength of judgment.

ment to direct it. I have thus discharged the promise I gave you in my last letter, which by this time I imagine (unless any accident has befallen the messenger) has reached your hands; for I trusted the conveyance of it to one, of whose diligence and fidelity I am well assured. I hope you will now, on your part, make me as full a return for this and my former, as the scene you are in will permit. Farewell.

Epist. XIII. PLINY TO PRISCUS.

AS I know you most eagerly take every occasion to oblige me, so there is no man to whom I had with more pleasure lay myself under an obligation. These two reasons, therefore, have determined me to apply to you, preferably to any body else, for a favour which I am extremely desirous of obtaining. You who have the command of a very considerable army, have thereby many opportunities of conferring benefits; and the length of time you have enjoyed that post, must have enabled you to bestow favours upon all your own friends. I hope you will now turn your eyes upon some of mine: they are but a few indeed, for whom I shall solicit you; though your generous disposition, I know, would be better pleased if the number were greater. But it would ill become me to trouble you with recommending more than one or two: at present I will only mention Voconius Romanus. His father was of great distinction among the Roman knights; and his father-in-law, or, as I might more properly call him, his second father, (for his affectionate treatment of Voconius entitles him to that appellation), was still more conspicuous. His mother was one of the most considerable ladies of Upper Spain: you know what character the people of that province

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vince bear, and how remarkable they are for the strictness of their manners. As for himself, he has been lately admitted into the sacred order of priesthood. Our friendship began with our studies, and we were early united in the closest intimacy. We lived together under the same roof, in town and country; as he shared with me my most serious and my gayest hours: and where, indeed, could I have found a more faithful friend, or more agreeable companion? In his conversation, and even in his very voice and countenance, there is the most amiable sweetness; as at the bar he discovers an elevated genius, an easy and harmonious elocution, a clear and penetrating apprehension. He has so happy a turn for* epistolary writing, that were you to read his

* It appears from this, and some other passages in these letters, that the art of epistolary writing was esteemed by the Romans, in the number of liberal and polite accomplishments; and we find Cicero mentioning with great pleasure, in some of his letters to Atticus, the elegant specimen he had received from his son, of his genius in this way. [ad Att. l. xv. 16. 17.] It seems indeed to have formed part of their education; as, in the opinion of Mr Locke, it well deserves to have a share in ours. “The writing of letters (as that judicious author observes) enters so much into all the occasions of life, that no gentleman can avoid shewing himself in compositions of this kind. Occurrences will daily force him to make this use of his pen, which lays open his breeding, his sense, and his abilities, to a severer examination than any oral discourse.” [Treat. on educ. 86.] Pliny was of the same opinion; for in a subsequent* letter, wherein he lays down a method of study to one who desired his sentiments upon that head, he particularly recommends

* Book 7. let. 9.

his letters, you would imagine they had been dictated by the muses themselves. I love him with a more than common affection, and I know he returns it with equal ardour. Even in the earlier part of our lives, I warmly embraced every

to him performances of this kind. It is to be wondered we have so few writers in our own language, who deserve to be pointed out as models upon such an occasion. After having named Sir William Temple, it would be difficult, perhaps, to add a second. The elegant writer of Mr Cowley's life, mentions him as excelling in this uncommon talent; but as that author declares himself of opinion, "That letters which pass between familiar friends, if they are written as they should be, can scarce ever be fit to see the light," the world is unluckily deprived of what, no doubt, would have been well worth its inspection. A late distinguished genius treats the very attempt as ridiculous, and professes himself "a mortal enemy to what they call a fine letter." His aversion however was not so strong but he knew how to conquer it when he thought proper, and the letter which closes his correspondence with Bishop Atterbury, is, perhaps, the most genteel and manly address that ever was penned to a friend in disgrace. The truth is, a fine letter does not consist in saying fine things, but expressing ordinary ones in an uncommon manner. It is the *proprie communia dicere*, the art of giving grace and elegance to familiar occurrences, that constitutes the merit of this kind of writing. Mr Gay's letter concerning the two lovers who were struck dead with the same flash of lightning, is a masterpiece of the sort; and the specimen he has there given of his talents for this species of composition, makes it much to be regretted we have not more from the same hand: we might then have equalled, if not excelled, our neighbours the French in this, as we have in every other branch of polite literature, and have found a name among our own countrymen to mention with the easy Voiture.

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opportunity of doing him all the good offices which then lay in my power ; as I have lately obtained for him of the emperor, the privilege granted to those who have three children : a favour, which though Cæsar very rarely bestows, and always with great caution, yet he conferred, at my request, in such a manner, as to give it the air and grace of being his own choice. The best way of shewing that I think he deserves the obligations he has already received from me, is, by adding more to them, especially as he always accepts my good offices with so much gratitude as to merit farther. Thus I have given you a faithful account of Romanus, and informed you how thoroughly I have experienced his worth, and how much I love him. Let me entreat you to honour him with your patronage in a way suitable to the generosity of your heart, and the eminence of your station. But, above all, admit him into a share of your affection ; for though you were to confer upon him the utmost you have in your power to bestow, you can give him nothing so valuable as your friendship. That you may see he is worthy of it, even to the highest degree of intimacy, I have sent you this short sketch of his character. I should continue my intercessions in his behalf, but that I am sure you do not love to be pressed, and I have already repeated them in every line of this letter : for to shew a just reason for what one asks, is to intercede in the strongest manner. Farewell.

Epist. XIV. PLINY to MAXIMUS.

YOU judged right : I am a good deal tired with pleading before the centumviri. The business one is engaged in there, has more of fatigue than pleasure. The causes are generally of small moment, and it is very seldom that any thing

thing considerable, either from the importance of the question, or the rank of the persons concerned, comes before them. There is this farther disagreeable circumstance attending it, that there are very few lawyers who frequent this court, with whom I can take any sort of satisfaction in being engaged. The greater part is composed of a parcel of impudent, obscure young men, who come hither raw and unpractised from the schools, with so much irreverence and impropriety, that my friend Attilius with great justness observed, "our youth set out at the bar "with centumviral causes, as they do at school "with Homer," intimating, that in both places they begin where they should end. But in former times, (to use an old man's phrase), it was not customary for the youth, even of the best families, to appear in this court, unless introduced by some person of consular dignity: so much respect did our ancestors bear to this noble profession. But now, since every fence of modesty and reverence is broken down, and all distinctions levelled and confounded, the youth of our days are so far from waiting to be introduced, that they rudely rush in uninvited. The audience that follow them are fit attendants for such orators; a low rout of hired mercenaries, assembling themselves in the middle of the court, where the dole is dealt round to them as openly, as if they were in a dining-room: and at this noble price they run from court to court! The Greeks have a name in their language for this sort of people, importing that they are applauders by profession; and we stigmatize them with the opprobrious title of table-flatterers: yet the meanness alluded to in both languages increases every day. It was but yesterday, two of my servants, mere striplings, were hired for this good-

ly office at the price of three * denarii: such is the easy purchase of eloquence! Upon these honourable terms, we fill our benches and gather a circle; and thus it is those unmerciful shouts are raised, when a man who stands in the middle of the ring gives the word. For you must know, these honest fellows who understand nothing of what is said, or if they did, could not hear it, would be at a loss, without a signal, how to time their applause; for those that do not hear a syllable are as clamorous as any of the rest. If at any time you should happen to pass by while the court is sitting, and would know the merit of any of our advocates, you have no occasion to give yourself the trouble of listening to them: take it for a rule, he that has the loudest commendations, deserves them the least: Largius Licinius was the first who gave rise to this custom; but then he went no farther than to solicit an audience. I remember to have heard my tutor Quinctilian say, that Domitius Afer, as he was pleading before the centumviri with his usual grave and solemn manner, heard on a sudden a most immoderate and unusual noise; being a good deal surprised he left off: the clamour ceased, and he began again: he was interrupted a second time, and a third. At last he inquired who it was that was speaking? He was told, Licinius. *Alas!* said he, *eloquence is no more!* The truth is, it then only began to decline, when, in Afer's opinion, it was entirely perished: whereas now it is almost utterly lost and extinct. I am ashamed to say with what an unmanly elocution the orators deliver themselves, and with what a squeaking applause they are received; no-

* About one shilling and eleven pence farthing of our money.

thing seems wanting to complete this sing-song oratory, but the claps, or rather the music of the stage. At present we chuse to express our admiration by a kind of howling, (for I can call it by no other term), which would be indecent even in the theatre. Hitherto the interest of my friends, and the consideration of my early time of life has retained me in this court: for it would be thought, I fear, rather to proceed from indolence than a just indignation at these indecencies, were I yet to leave it: however, I come there less frequently than usual, and am thus making a gradual retreat. Farewell.

Epist. XV. PLINY to VALERIANUS.

TELL us, how does your Marſian eſtate pleaſe you, which you bought long ago? How do you like your new purchaſe? Are all theſe lands as fair in your eye, ſince they became your property, as they were before? For, to ſay truth, it ſeldom happens, that what is already poſſeſſed, proves ſo agreeable, as when it was only in wiſh and proſpect.

My mother's eſtate does not at all ſuit me in its ſituation; but it pleaſes me, becauſe it was hers. And now time and patience have accuſtomed and hardened me to bear all the inconveniencies ariſing from it; for, by having had conſtant complaints to make, I am grown abſolutely aſhamed of complaining. Farewell.

Epist. XVI. PLINY to ANNIANUS.

WITH your uſual attention to my affairs, you admoniſh me not to look upon the codicils of Acilianus, who has appointed me his heir *ex parte*, as legal; becauſe they are not confirmed by the will itſelf. This is a point of law,

law, with which I am very well acquainted: and it is known even by those, who know little else. But I have always laid it down as a rule to myself, never to disobey the will of the dead; but to act under every will, though it should be defective in point of form, as if it had been perfected and valid. However, the codicils were all written by Acilianus's own hand; and though they are not confirmed by the will itself, they ought to be looked upon by me, in the same light as if they needed no such authority; especially, as there is no room for an information to be lodged against me. If indeed there was any danger, that what I gave away, would be forfeited to the public, I ought to act with less haste, and with more caution: but, when it is entirely in the power of an heir to dispose of whatever falls to him by inheritance, I am under no necessity to break through my own private rule, since it is not repugnant to any public institution. Farewell.

Epist. XVII. PLINY to GALLUS.

YOU wonder, why I am so very fond of my Laurentinum, or (if you had rather call it so) my Laurens: but your wonder will cease, when I acquaint you with the beauty of the villa, the advantages of its situation, and the extensive prospect of the sea-coast. It is but seventeen miles distant from Rome; so that having finished my affairs in town, I can pass my evenings here without breaking in upon the business of the day. There are two different roads to it; if you go by that of Laurentum, you must turn off at the fourteenth mile-stone; if by Ostia, at the 11th. Both of them are in some parts sandy, which makes it something heavy and tedious if you travel in a coach, but easy and pleasant to those who ride. The landscape on all sides is extremely diversified, the prospect in some places being confined by
woods,

woods, in others extending over large and beautiful meadows, where numberless flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, which the severity of the winter has drove from the mountains, fatten in the vernal warmth of this rich pasturage. My villa is large enough to afford conveniencies, without being extensive. The porch before it is plain, but not mean, through which you enter into a portico in the form of the letter D, which includes a small, but agreeable area. This affords a very commodious retreat in bad weather, not only as it is inclosed with windows, but particularly as it is sheltered by an extraordinary projection of the roof. From the middle of this portico you pass into an inward court extremely pleasant, and from thence into a handsome hall which runs out towards the sea; so that when there is a south-west wind it is gently washed with the waves, which spend themselves at the foot of it. On every side of this hall there are either folding-doors or windows equally large, by which means you have a view from the front and the two sides, as it were of three different seas: from the back part you see the middle court, the portico and the area; and by another view you look through the portico into the porch, from whence the prospect is terminated by the woods and mountains which are seen at a distance. On the left hand of this hall, something farther from the sea, lies a large drawing-room, and beyond that, a second of a smaller size, which has one window to the rising, and another to the setting sun: this has likewise a prospect of the sea, but being at a greater distance, is less incommoded by it. The angle which the projection of the hall forms with this drawing-room, retains and increases the warmth of the sun, and hither my family retreat in winter to perform their exercises: it is sheltered from all winds except those which are general-ly

ly attended with clouds, so that nothing can render this place useless, but what at the same time destroys the fair weather. Contiguous to this, is a room forming the segment of a circle, the windows of which are so placed as to receive the sun the whole day: in the walls are contrived a sort of cases, which contain a collection of such authors whose works can never be read too often. From hence you pass into a bedchamber through a passage, which being boarded and suspended as it were over a stove which runs underneath, tempers the heat which it receives and conveys to all parts of this room. The remainder of the side of the house, is appropriated to the use of my slaves and freedmen; but however most of the apartments in it are neat enough to entertain any of my friends, who are inclined to be my guests. In the opposite wing is a room ornamented in a very elegant taste; next to which lies another room, which though large for a parlour, makes but a moderate dining-room; it is exceedingly warmed and enlightened not only to the direct rays of the sun, but by their reflection from the sea. Beyond this, is a bedchamber together with its antechamber, the height of which renders it cool in summer, as its being sheltered on all sides from the winds, makes it warm in winter. To this apartment another of the same sort is joined by one common wall. From thence you enter into the grand and spacious *cooling-room* belonging to the baths, from the opposite walls of which two round basins project, large enough to swim in. Contiguous to this is the perfuming-room, then the sweating-room, and beyond that the furnace which conveys the heat to the baths: adjoining are two other little bathing-rooms, which are fitted up in an elegant rather than costly manner: annexed to this, is a warm bath of extraordinary workmanship, wherein one

may swim, and have a prospect at the same time of the sea. Not far from hence stands the tennis-court, which lies open to the warmth of the afternoon sun. From thence you ascend a sort of turret, which contains two entire apartments below; as there are the same number above, besides a dining-room which commands a very extensive prospect of the sea and coast, together with the beautiful villas that stand interspersed upon it. At the other end, is a second turret, containing a room which faces the rising and setting sun. Behind this, is a large room for a repository, near to which is a gallery of curiosities, and underneath, a spacious dining-room, where the roaring of the sea, even in a storm, is heard but faintly: it looks upon the garden and the gestatio, which surrounds the garden. The gestatio is encompassed with a box-tree hedge, and where that is decayed, with rosemary: for the box in those parts which are sheltered by the buildings, preserves its verdure perfectly well; but where by an open situation it lies exposed to the dashing of the sea-water, though at a great distance, it entirely withers. Between the garden and this gestatio runs a shady walk of vines, which is so soft that you may walk bare-foot upon it without any injury. The garden is chiefly planted with fig and mulberry trees, to which this soil is as favourable, as it is averse to all others. In this place is a banqueting-room, which though it stands remote from the sea, enjoys however a prospect nothing inferior to that view: two apartments run round the back part of it, whose windows look upon the entrance of the villa, and into a very pleasant kitchen-garden. From hence an inclosed portico extends itself, which by its grandeur you might take for a public one. It has a range of windows on each side, but on that which looks towards the sea they are double the number

number of those next the garden. When the weather is fair and serene, these are all thrown open; but if it blows, those on the side the wind sits are shut, while the others remain unclosed without any inconvenience. Before this portico lies a terrace perfumed with violets, and warmed by the reflection of the sun from the portico, which as it retains the rays, so it keeps off the north-east wind; and it is as warm on this side, as it is cool on the opposite; in the same manner it is a defence against the south-west, and thus, in short, by means of its several sides, breaks the force of the winds from what point soever they blow. These are some of the winter-advantages of this agreeable situation, which however are still more considerable in the summer; for at that season it throws a shade upon the terrace during all the forenoon, as it defends the gestatio, and that part of the garden which lies contiguous to it, from the afternoon sun, and casts a greater or less shade, as the day either increases or decreases; but the portico itself is then coolest when the sun is most scorching, that is, when its rays fall directly upon the roof. To these advantages I must not forget to add, that, by setting open the windows, the western breezes have a free draught, and by that means the inclosed air is prevented from stagnating. On the upper end of the terrace and portico stands a detached building in the garden, which I call my favourite; and in truth I am extremely fond of it, as I erected it myself. It contains a very warm winter-room, one side of which looks upon the terrace, the other has a view of the sea, and both lie exposed to the sun. Through the folding-doors you see the opposite chamber, and from the window is a prospect of the inclosed portico. On that side next the sea, and opposite to the middle wall, stands a little elegant retired closet, which, by

means of glass doors and a curtain, is either laid into the adjoining room, or separated from it. It contains a couch and two chairs: As you lie upon this couch, from the feet you have a prospect of the sea; if you look behind, you see the neighbouring villas; and from the head you have a view of the woods: these three views may be seen either distinctly from so many different windows in the room, or blended together in one confused prospect. Adjoining to this, is a bedchamber, which neither the voice of the servants, the murmur of the sea, nor even the roaring of a tempest can reach; not lightning nor the day itself can penetrate it, unless you open the windows. This profound tranquillity is occasioned by a passage, which divides the wall of this chamber from that of the garden, and thus, by means of that void intervening space, every noise is drowned. Annexed to this, is a small stove-room, which, by opening a little window, warms the bedchamber to the degree of heat required. Beyond this lies a chamber and antechamber, which enjoys the sun, though obliquely indeed, from the time it rises till the afternoon. When I retire to this garden-apartment, I fancy myself a hundred miles from my own house, and take particular pleasure in it at the feast of the Saturnalia, when, by the licence of that season of joy, every other part of my villa resounds with the mirth of my domestics: thus I neither interrupt their diversions, nor they my studies. Among the pleasures and conveniencies of this situation, there is one disadvantage, and that is, the want of a running stream; but this defect is in a great measure supplied by wells, or rather I should call them springs, for they rise very near the surface. And indeed the quality of this coast is pretty remarkable; for in what part soever you dig, you meet, upon the first turning

turning up of the ground, with a spring of pure water, not in the least salt, though so near the sea. The neighbouring forests afford an abundant supply of fuel; as every other convenience of life may be had from Ostia: to a moderate man, indeed, even the next village (between which and my house there is only one villa) would furnish all common necessities. In that little place there are no less than three public baths; which is a great conveniency if it happens that my friends come in unexpectedly, or make too short a stay to allow time for preparing my own. The whole coast is beautifully diversified by the joining or detached villas that are spread upon it, which, whether you view them from the sea or the shore, have a much more agreeable effect, than if it were crouded with towns. It is sometimes, after a long calm, good travelling upon the coast, though in general, by the storms driving the waves upon it, it is rough and uneven. I cannot boast that our sea produces any very extraordinary fish; however, it supplies us with exceeding fine soals and prawns: but as to provisions of other kinds, my villa pretends to excel even inland countries, particularly in milk; for thither the cattle come from the meadows in great numbers, in pursuit of shade and water. Tell me now, have I not just cause to bestow my time and my affection upon this delightful retreat? Surely you are unreasonably attached to the pleasures of the town, if you have no inclination to take a view of it; as I much wish you had, that to so many charms with which my favourite villa abounds, it might have the very considerable addition of your presence to recommend it. Farewell.

Epist. XVIII. PLINY to MAURICUS.

WHat more agreeable injunction can you lay upon me, than to desire I would look out for a preceptor to your brother's children? By this kind act you give me an opportunity of revisiting the scene of my education, and of turning back again to the most pleasing part of my life. I take my seat, as formerly, among the young lads, and have the pleasure to experience the respect my character in eloquence meets with from them. I lately came in upon them, while they were warmly declaiming before a very full audience of persons of the first rank; the moment I appeared, they were silent. I mention this for their honour, rather than my own; and to let you see the just hopes you may conceive of placing your nephews here to their advantage. I purpose to hear all the several professors; and when I have done so, I shall write you such an account of them as will enable you (as far as a letter can enable you) to judge of their respective abilities. The faithful execution of this important commission, is what I owe to the friendship that subsists between us, and to the memory of your brother. Nothing, certainly, is more your concern, than that his children (I would have said yours, but that I know you now look upon them even with more tenderness than your own) may be found worthy of such a father, and such an uncle: and I should have claimed a part in that care, though you had not required it of me. I am sensible, in chusing a preceptor, I shall draw upon me the displeasure of all the rest of that profession: but when the interest of these young men is concerned, I esteem it my duty to hazard the displeasure, or even enmity of any man, with as much resolution

tion as a parent would for his own children.
Farewell.

Epist. XIX. PLINY TO CEREALIS.

YOU advise me to rehearse my late speech before a large number of my friends. I shall obey, because the command comes from you, though I have many scruples about it. Compositions of this kind lose, I well know, all their fire and force, and even almost their very name, by a plain recital. It is the solemnity of the tribunal, the concourse of one's friends, the expectation of the success, the emulation between the several orators concerned, the different parties formed amongst the audience in their favour; in a word, it is the air, the * motion, the attitude of the speaker, with all the corresponding gestures of his body, which conspire to give a spirit and grace to what he delivers. Hence those who sit when they plead, though they have most of the other advantages I just now mentioned, yet, from that single circumstance, weaken and depress the whole force of their eloquence. The eyes and hands of the reader, those important in-

* Some of the Roman orators were as much too vehement in their action, as those of our country are too calm and spiritless. In the violence of their elocution they not only used all the warmth of gesture, but actually walked backwards and forwards. Tully and Quintilian have laid down rules how far, and in what instance this liberty was allowable, and both agree, it ought to be used with great caution and judgment. The latter of those excellent critics mentions upon this occasion a witticism of Flavius Virginius, who asked one of these walking orators, *Quot millia passuum declamasset?* "How many miles he had declaimed?" Quinct. inst. ed. Oxon. p. 587.

struments of graceful elocution, being engaged, it is no wonder the hearer grows languid, while he has none of those awakening charms to excite and engage his attention. To these general considerations, I must add this particular disadvantageous circumstance, which attends the speech in question, that it is chiefly of the argumentative kind; and it is natural for an author to suspect, that what he wrote with labour will not be read with pleasure. For who is there so unprejudiced, as not to prefer the flowing and florid oration, to one in this close and unornamented style? It is very unreasonable there should be any difference; however it is certain the judges generally expect one manner of pleading, and the audience another; whereas in truth an auditor ought to be affected only with those things which would strike him, were he in the place of the judge. Nevertheless it is possible the objections which lie against this piece may be got over, in consideration of the novelty it has to recommend it: the novelty I mean with respect to us; for the Greek orators have a method, though upon a different occasion, not altogether unlike what I made use of. They, when they would throw out a law, as contrary to some former one unrepealed, argue by comparing those laws together: so I, on the contrary, endeavoured to shew, that the crime which I was insisting upon as falling within the intent and meaning of the law relating to public extortions, was agreeable, not only to that, but likewise to other laws of the same nature. Those who are not conversant in the laws of their country, can have no taste for reasonings of this kind; but those who are, ought to be so much the more pleased with them. I shall endeavour therefore, if you persist in my reciting it, to collect a judicious audience. But before you determine this point, I entreat you thoroughly to weight the difficulties

difficulties I have laid before you, and then decide as reason shall direct: for it is reason that must justify you: obedience to your commands will be a sufficient apology for me. Farewell.

Epist. XX. PLINY to CALVISIUS.

OPen your purse: I have a story to tell you worth gold; nay I have two or three; for one brings to my mind another. It is no matter which I begin with, so take them as follows. Verania, the widow of Piso who was adopted by Galba, lay extremely ill: upon this occasion Regulus made her a visit. By the way, mark the assurance of the man, to visit a lady to whom he was so extremely odious, and to whose husband he was a declared enemy! Even barely to enter her house would have been impudent enough: but he had the confidence to go much farther, and very familiarly placed himself by her bed's side. He began very gravely with inquiring what day and hour she was born? Being informed of these important particulars, he composes his countenance, fixes his eyes, mutters something to himself, counts his fingers, and all this merely to keep the poor sick lady in suspense. When he had finished this ridiculous mummerly, *You are, says he, in one of your climacterics; however, you will get over it. But for your greater satisfaction, I will consult with a certain diviner, whose skill I have frequently experienced.* Accordingly away he goes, consults the omens, and returns with the strongest assurances that they confirmed what he had promised on the part of the stars. Upon this the credulous good woman calls for her will, and gives Regulus a handsome legacy. Some time afterwards her distemper increased; and in her last moments she exclaimed against this infamous wretch who had thus basely

ly deceived her, though he wished every curse might befall his son, if what he promised her was not true. But such sort of imprecations are as common with Regulus, as they are impious; and he continually devotes that unhappy youth to the curses of those gods, whose vengeance his own frauds every day provoke.

Velleius Blæsus, a person of consular dignity, and remarkable for his immense wealth, in his last sickness had an inclination to make some alterations in his will. Regulus, who had lately endeavoured to insinuate himself into his friendship, hoped to receive some advantage by the intended change, and accordingly applies himself to his physicians, and conjures them to exert all their skill to prolong the poor man's life. But the moment the will was signed, his style was changed: *How long*, says he to these very physicians, *do you design to keep this man in misery? since you cannot preserve his life, why will you prolong his death?* Blæsus is since dead; and, as if he had overheard every word that Regulus had said, he has not left him one farthing. — And now have you had enough? or, like a truant schoolboy, are you for listening still to another tale? If so, Regulus will supply you. You must know then, that Aurelia, a lady of distinguished accomplishments, designing to execute her will, had dressed herself for that purpose in a very splendid manner. Regulus, who was present as a witness, turned about to the lady, and, *Pray*, says he, *leave me these fine cloaths.* Aurelia at first thought him in jest: but he insisted upon it very seriously, and obliged her to open her will, and insert this legacy; and though he saw her write it, yet he would not be satisfied till he read the clause himself. However, Aurelia is still alive: though Regulus, no doubt, when he solicited this bequest, expected soon to enjoy it.

it. Thus are legacies and estates conferred upon this abandoned man, as if he really deserved them! but why should I wonder at this in a city where impudence and iniquity receive the same, do I say, even greater encouragement than modesty and virtue? Regulus is a glaring instance of this truth, who, from a state of indigence, has, by a train of the most villanous actions, arrived to such immense riches, that he once told me, upon consulting the omens to know how soon he should be worth sixty millions of sesterces, he found them so favourable to him, as to portend he should possess double that sum. And possibly he may, if he continues thus to dictate wills for other people: a sort of fraud, in my estimation, of all others the most infamous. Farewell.

B O O K III.

Epist. I. PLINY to CALVISIUS.

I Cannot recollect, that I ever spent my time more agreeably, than I did lately with Spurrinna. I am so much pleased with the uninterrupted regularity of his way of life, that if ever I should arrive at old age, there is no man whom I would sooner chuse for my model. I look upon order in human actions, especially at that advanced period, with the same sort of pleasure as I behold the settled course of the heavenly bodies. In youth, indeed, there is a certain irregularity and agitation by no means unbecoming: but in age, when business is unseasonable, and ambition indecent, all should be calm and uniform. This rule Spurrinna religiously pursues throughout his whole conduct. Even in those transactions which one might call minute and inconsiderable,

derable, did they not occur every day, he observes a certain periodical season and method. The first part of the morning he devotes to study; at eight he dresses, and walks about three miles, in which he enjoys at once contemplation and exercise. At his return, if he has any friends with him in his house, he enters upon some polite and useful topic of conversation; if he is alone, somebody reads to him; and sometimes too, when he is not, if it is agreeable to his company. When this is over, he reposes himself, and then again either takes up a book, or falls into some discourse even more entertaining and instructive. He afterwards takes the air in his chariot, either with his wife, (who is a lady of uncommon merit), or with some friend: a happiness which lately was mine. — How agreeable, how noble is the enjoyment of him in that hour of privacy! You would fancy you were hearing some worthy of ancient times, inflaming your breast with the most heroic examples, and instructing your mind with the most exalted precepts, which yet he delivers with so modest an air, that there is not the least appearance of dictating in his conversation. When he has thus taken a tour of about seven miles, he gets out of his chariot and walks a mile more; after which he returns home, and either reposes himself, or retires to his study. He has an excellent taste for poetry, and composes in the lyric manner, both in Greek and Latin, with great judgment. It is surprising what an ease and spirit of gaiety runs through his verses, which the merit of the author renders still more valuable. When the baths are ready, which in winter is about three o'clock, and in summer about two, he undresses himself; and if there happens to be no wind, he walks for some time in the sun. After this he plays a considerable time at tennis:

for,

for, by this sort of exercise too, he combats the effects of old age. When he has bathed, he throws himself upon his couch till supper-time, and in the mean while some agreeable and entertaining author is read to him. In this, as in all the rest, his friends are at full liberty to partake; or to employ themselves in any other manner more suitable to their taste. You sit down to an elegant, yet frugal repast, which is served up in pure and antique plate. He has likewise a complete equipage for his side-board, in Corinthian metal, which is his pleasure, not his passion. At his table he is frequently entertained with comedians, that even his very amusements may be seasoned with good sense; and though he continues there, even in summer, till the night is something advanced, yet he prolongs the feast with so much affability and politeness, that none of his guests ever think it tedious. By this method of living he has preserved all his senses entire, and his body active and vigorous to his 78th year, without discovering any appearance of old age, but the wisdom. This is the sort of life which I ardently aspire after; as I purpose to enjoy it, when I shall arrive at those years which will justify a retreat from business. In the mean while, I am embarrassed with a thousand affairs, in which Spurrinna is at once my support and my example. As long as it became him, he entered into all the duties of public life. It was by passing through the various offices of the state, by governing of provinces, and by indefatigable toil, that he merited the repose he now enjoys. I propose to myself the same course and the same end: and I give it to you under my hand that I do so. If an ill-timed ambition should carry me beyond it, produce this letter against me; and condemn me to repose, whenever I can en-

joy it without being reproached with indolence.
Farewell.

Epist. II. PLINY to MAXIMUS.

WHat I should readily have offered to your friends, if I were in your station, I think I may claim a right to request for mine. Arrianus Maturius is a person of the most considerable rank among the * Altinates. When I call him so, it is not with respect to his fortunes (which however are very considerable); it is in view to the purity, the integrity, the prudence, and the gravity of his manners. His counsel steers me in my affairs, and his judgment directs me in my studies; for truth, honour, and knowledge, are the shining qualities which mark his character. He loves me (and I cannot express his affection in stronger terms) with a tenderness equal to yours. As he is a stranger to the passion of ambition, he is contented with remaining in the equestrian order, when he might easily have advanced himself into a higher rank. It behoves me however to take care his merit be rewarded with the honours it deserves; and I would fain without his knowledge or expectation, and probably too contrary to his inclination, add to his dignity. The post I would obtain for him should be something very honourable, and yet attended with no trouble. I beg when any thing of that nature offers, you would think of him; it will be an obligation, which both he and I shall ever remember with the greatest gratitude. For though he has no aspiring wishes to satisfy, he will be as sensible of the favour, as if he had received it in consequence of his own desires. Farewell.

* Altino in the Venetian territories, now destroyed.

Epist. III. PLINY TO HISPULLA.

I AM in doubt, whether I most loved or admired that great and good man your father; but this is most certain, that, in respect to his memory and your virtues, I have the greatest affection for you. Can I fail then to wish (as I shall by every means in my power endeavour) that your son may copy the virtues of both his grandfathers, particularly his maternal? as indeed his father and his uncle will furnish him also with very illustrious examples. The surest method to train him up in the steps of these valuable men, is early to season his mind with polite learning and useful knowledge: and it is of the last consequence from whom he receives these instructions. Hitherto he has had his education under your eye, and in your house, where he is exposed to few, I should rather say to no wrong impressions. But he is now of an age to be sent from home, and it is time to place him with some professor of rhetoric; of whose discipline and method, but above all of whose morals, you may be well satisfied. Amongst the many advantages for which this amiable youth is indebted to nature and fortune, he has that of a most beautiful person: it is necessary therefore, in this loose and slippery age, to find out one who will not only be his tutor, but his guardian and his guide. I will venture to recommend Julius Genitor to you under that character. I love him, I confess, extremely: but my affection does by no means prejudice my judgment; on the contrary it is, in truth, the effect of it. His behaviour is grave, and his morals irreproachable; perhaps something too severe and rigid for the libertine manners of these times. His qualifications in his profession you may learn from many others: for the art of

eloquence, as it is open to all the world, is soon discovered; but the qualities of the heart lie more concealed, and out of the reach of common observation; and it is on that side I undertake to be answerable for my friend. Your son will hear nothing from this worthy man, but what will be for his advantage to know, nor learn any thing of which it would be happier he should be ignorant. He will represent to him as often, and with as much zeal as you or I should, the virtues of his family, and what a glorious weight of characters he has to support. You will not hesitate then to place him with a tutor, whose first care will be to form his manners, and afterwards to instruct him in eloquence; an attainment ill-acquired if with the neglect of moral improvements. Farewell.

Epist. IV. PLINY to MACRINUS.

THough both my friends who were present, and the generality of people, seem to approve of my conduct in the affair I am going to mention, yet I cannot satisfy myself without knowing your sentiments; and as I wished for your advice before I engaged in it, so I am extremely desirous of your judgment now it is over. Having obtained leave to be absent from my office as head of the treasury, I went into Tuscany to look after some works which I am carrying on there for the benefit of that province, at my own expense. In the interval, deputies on the part of the Pæfici arrived, with complaints of some grievances they had suffered under the government of Cæcilius Classicus; and applied to the senate that I might be appointed counsel for them. My very worthy and obliging colleagues represented on my behalf, the necessary engagements of our office, and endeavoured all they could

could to get me excused. Upon this the senate passed a decree greatly to my honour: they ordered that I should be counsel for the province, provided the deputies could obtain my consent. At my return they were again introduced into the senate, and there renewed their petition in my presence. They conjured me by that generous assistance I had given them in their cause against Bæbius, and by all the obligations I lay under of supporting my avowed clients, that I would not now desert them. I perceived the senate was inclined to grant this petition, by that general assent which is the usual forerunner of all their decrees. Whereupon I rose up and told the house, that I no longer insisted upon the reasonableness of the excuse I had alleged: and they were pleased with the respectful modesty of my answer. I was determined in this resolution, not only because I found it agreeable to the inclinations of the senate (which indeed had great weight with me), but for many other, though less important considerations. I reflected, that our ancestors thought themselves obliged to engage voluntarily in defence of those particular persons, with whom they were united by the laws of hospitality, and that therefore it would be highly ungenerous to abandon a collective body, to whom I stood in the same relation. Besides, I considered the danger as well as the fatigue I went through in the last cause I undertook for this province, and I was unwilling to lose the merit of my former services, by denying them this. For such is the disposition of mankind, the favour you refuse, cancels all you have conferred; and though you oblige them ever so often, they will forget a thousand compliances, and yet remember a single denial. I considered likewise, that Cæcilius being dead, the great objection of exposing a senator, was removed; and

that in undertaking this defence, I should merit the same thanks as if he were alive, without the hazard of giving any particular offence. In a word, I thought if I complied with their desires in this instance, I could with a better grace deny my assistance to them in any future cause, where I might have personal reasons for declining to be their counsel. For all our offices have their limits; and the best way of reserving to ourselves the liberty of refusing where we would, is to comply where we can. Thus you have heard the motives which influenced me in this transaction: it now remains that you give me your sentiments, which I shall receive with equal pleasure, either as an instance of your sincerity, or a sanction to my conduct. Farewell.

Epist. V. PLINY to MACER.

I AM extremely pleased, that you read my uncle's books so diligently, as to wish to have a complete collection of them; and for that purpose desire me to send you an account of all the treatises he wrote. I will point them out to you in the order in which they were composed: for however immaterial that may seem, it is a sort of information not at all unacceptable to men of letters. The first book he published was, a treatise concerning the *art of using a javelin on horseback*: this he wrote when he commanded a troop of horse, and it is drawn up with great accuracy and judgment. *The life of Pomponius Secundus, in two volumes*: Pomponius had a very great affection for him, and he thought he owed this tribute to his memory. *The history of the wars in Germany, twenty books*, in which he gave an account of all the battles we were engaged in against that nation. A dream which he had when he served in the army in Germany, first suggested to him the

the design of this work. He imagined that Drusus Nero (who extended his conquests very far into that country, and there lost his life) appeared to him in his sleep, and conjured him not to suffer his memory to be buried in oblivion. He has left us likewise a *treatise upon eloquence*, divided into six volumes. In this work he takes the orator from his cradle, and leads him on till he has carried him up to the highest point of perfection in this art. In the latter part of Nero's reign, when the tyranny of the times made it dangerous to engage in studies of a more free and elevated spirit, he published a piece of criticism in eight books, concerning ambiguity in expression. He has completed the history which Aufidius Bassus left unfinished, and has added to it thirty books. And lastly, he has left thirty-seven books upon the subject of natural history: this is a work of great compass and learning, and almost as full of variety as nature herself. You will wonder how a man so engaged as he was, could find time to compose such a number of books; and some of them too upon abstruse subjects. But your surprise will rise still higher, when you hear, that for some time he engaged in the profession of an advocate, that he died in his fifty-sixth year, that from the time of his quitting the bar to his death he was employed in the execution of the highest posts, and in the service of his prince. But he had a quick apprehension, joined to unwearied application. In summer he always began his studies as soon as it was night; in winter generally at one in the morning, but never later than two, and often at midnight. No man ever spent less time in bed, inasmuch that he would sometimes, without retiring from his book, take a short sleep, and then pursue his studies. Before day-break he used to wait upon Vespasian; who likewise chose that season

season to transact business. When he had finished the affairs which that emperor committed to his charge, he returned home again to his studies. After a short and light repast at noon (agreeably to the good old custom of our ancestors) he would frequently in the summer, if he was disengaged from business, repose himself in the sun; during which time some author was read to him, from whence he made extracts and observations, as indeed this was his constant method whatever book he read: for it was a maxim of his, that "no book was so bad, but something might be learned from it." When this was over, he generally went into the cold bath, and as soon as he came out of it, just took a slight refreshment, and then reposed himself for a little while. Thus, as if it had been a new day, he immediately resumed his studies till supper-time, when a book was again read to him, upon which he would make some hasty remarks. I remember once his *reader* having pronounced a word wrong, somebody at the table made him repeat it again; upon which my uncle asked his friend if he understood it? Who acknowledging that he did; *Why then,* said he, *would you make him go back again? We have lost by this interruption above ten lines:* so covetous was this great man of time! In summer he always rose from supper by day-light; and in winter as soon as it was dark: and this was an invariable law with him. Such was his manner of life amidst the noise and hurry of the town; but in the country his whole time was devoted to study without intermission, excepting only when he bathed. But in this exception I include no more than the time he was actually in the bath; for all the while he was rubbed and wiped, he was employed either in hearing some book read to him, or in dictating himself. In his journeys he lost no time from his studies, but his

his mind at those seasons being disengaged from all other thoughts, applied itself wholly to that single pursuit. A secretary constantly attended him in his chariot, who, in the winter, wore a particular sort of warm gloves, that the sharpness of the weather might not occasion any interruption to his studies : and for the same reason my uncle always used a chair in Rome. I remember he once reproved me for walking : “ You might,” said he, “ employ those hours to more advantage :” for he thought all was time lost, that was not given to study. By this extraordinary application he found time to write so many volumes, besides one hundred and sixty which he left me, consisting of a kind of common-place, written on both sides, in a very small character ; so that one might fairly reckon the number considerably more. I have heard him say, when he was comptroller of the revenue in Spain, Largius Licinius offered him four hundred thousand * sesterces for these manuscripts : and yet they were not then quite so numerous. When you reflect upon the books he has read, and the volumes he has wrote, are you not inclined to suspect that he never was engaged in the affairs of the public, or the service of his prince ? On the other hand, when you are informed how indefatigable he was in his studies, are you not disposed to wonder that he read and wrote no more ? For, on one side, what obstacles would not the business of a court throw in his way ? And on the other what is it that such intense application might not perform ? I cannot but smile therefore when I hear myself called a studious man, who in comparison to him am a mere loiterer. But why do I mention myself, who am diverted from these pursuits, by numberless affairs both public and private ? Even they whose whole lives are en-

* About 3200 l. of our money.

gaged in study, must blush when placed in the same view with him.—I have run out my letter, I perceive, beyond the extent I at first designed, which was only to inform you, as you desired, what treatises he has left behind him. But I trust this will not be less acceptable to you than the books themselves, as it may possibly not only raise your curiosity to read his works, but your emulation to copy his example, by some attempts of the same nature. Farewell.

Epist VI. PLINY TO SEVERUS.

I Have lately bought, with a legacy that was left me, a statue of Corinthian brass. It is small indeed, but handsome and done to the life, at least if I have any judgment; which most certainly in matters of this sort, as perhaps in all others, is extremely defective. However, I think I have a taste to discover the beauties of this figure: as it is naked, the faults, if there be any, as well as the perfections, are more observable. It represents an old man in a standing posture. The bones, the muscles, the veins, and wrinkles are so strongly expressed, that you would imagine the figure to be animated. The character is well preserved throughout every part of the body: the hair is thin, the forehead broad, the face shrivelled, the throat lank, the arms languid, the breast fallen, and the belly sunk; as the whole turn and air of the figure behind, is expressive of old age. It appears to be antique from the colour of the brass. In short, it is a performance so highly finished as to merit the attention of the most curious, and to afford at the same time pleasure to the most common observer: and this induced me, who am a mere novice in this art, to buy it. But I did so, not with any intent of placing it in
my

my own house, (for I have nothing of that kind there), but with a design of fixing it in some conspicuous place in my native province, perhaps in the temple of Jupiter: for it is a present well worthy of a temple and a god. I desire therefore you would, with that care with which you always execute my requests, give immediate orders for a pedestal to be made for it. I leave the choice of the marble to you, but let my name be engraven upon it, and, if you think proper, my titles. I will send the statue by the first opportunity; or possibly (which I am sure you will like better) I may bring it myself: for I intend, if I can find leisure, to make an excursion to you. This is a piece of news which I know you will rejoice to hear; but you will soon change your countenance when I tell you, my visit will be only for a few days: for the same business that now detains me here, will prevent my making a longer stay. Farewell.

Epist. VII. PLINY TO CANINIUS.

I AM just now told, that Silius Italicus has starved himself to death, at his country-house near Naples. The cause was his ill health. Having been afflicted with an imposthume which was deemed incurable, he grew weary of life under such uneasy circumstances, and therefore put an end to it, with the most determined courage. He had been extremely fortunate through the whole course of his days, excepting only the loss of his younger son; however, that was made up to him in the satisfaction of seeing his eldest, who is of a more amiable character, attain the consular dignity, and of leaving him in a very flourishing situation. He suffered a little in his reputation in the time of Nero, having been suspected of forwardly joining in some of
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the informations which were carried on in the reign of that prince ; but he made use of his interest in Vitellius, with great discretion and humanity. He acquired much honour by his administration of the government of Asia ; and by his approved behaviour after his retirement from business, cleared his character from that stain which his former intrigues had thrown upon it. He lived among the nobility of Rome, without power, and consequently without envy. Though he frequently was confined to his bed, and always to his chamber, yet he was highly respected and much visited ; not with a view to his wealth, but merely on account of his merit. He employed his time between conversing with men of letters, and composing of verses ; which he sometimes recited, in order to try the sentiments of the public : but he discovered in them more industry than genius. In the decline of his years he entirely quitted Rome, and lived altogether in Campania, from whence even the accession of the new emperor could not draw him. A circumstance which I mention as well to the honour of the prince, who was not displeased with that liberty, as of Italicus, who was not afraid to make use of it. He was reproached with being fond of all the elegancies of the fine arts to a degree of excess. He had several villas in the same province, and the last purchase was always the chief favourite, to the neglect of the rest. They were all furnished with large collections of books, statues, and pictures, which he more than enjoyed, he even adored ; particularly that of Virgil, of whom he was so passionate an admirer, that he celebrated the anniversary of that poet's birthday with more solemnity than his own ; especially at Naples, where he used to approach his tomb with as much reverence as if it had been a temple. In

this

this tranquillity he lived to the seventy-fifth year of his age, with a delicate, rather than a sickly constitution. It is remarkable, that as he was the last person upon whom Nero conferred the consular office, (that prince being killed during his consulship), so he was the last also that survived of all those who had been raised by him to that dignity. When I consider this, I cannot forbear lamenting the transitory condition of mankind. Is there any thing in nature so short and limited as human life, even in its most extended period? Does it not seem to you, my friend, but yesterday, that Nero was upon the throne? and yet not one of all those who were consuls in his reign now remains! But why should I wonder at an event so common? Lucius Piso (the father of that Piso who was infamously assassinated by Valerius Festus in Africa) used to say, he did not see one person in the senate who sat in that house when he was consul: such multitudes are swept away in so short a space! I am therefore so far from thinking those tears of Xerxes need any apology, that in my judgment history does honour to his character, which informs us, that when this prince had attentively surveyed his immense army, he could not refrain from weeping, with the thought that so many thousand lives would so soon be extinct. The more ardent therefore should our zeal be to lengthen out this short portion of existence, by acquisitions of glory, if not in the active scenes of life, (which is not always in our own power), yet however in those of study and contemplation; and since it is not granted us to live long, let us transmit to posterity some memorial that we have at least lived. I well know, you want not any incitement to virtue; but the warmth of my affection for you, inclines me to forward you in the course you al-

ready pursue; as I have often found myself encouraged by your generous exhortations. How glorious is the contention, when two friends thus strive who shall animate each other most in their pursuits of immortal fame! Farewell.

Epist. VIII. PLINY to TRANQUILLUS.

YOU act agreeably to that regard with which you always entreat, by so earnest a solicitation, that I would confer the military tribunate upon your relation, Cæsennius Silvanus, which I had obtained of the most illustrious Neratius Marcellus for yourself. As it would have given me great pleasure to have seen you in that post, so it will not be less acceptable to me to have it bestowed upon one whom you recommend. For hardly, I think, would it be consistent to wish a man advanced to honours, and yet envy him a title far nobler than any other he can receive, even that of a generous and an affectionate relation. To deserve and to grant favours, is the fairest point of view in which we can be placed; and this amiable character will be yours, if you resign to your friend, what is due to your own merit. I must acknowledge at the same time, I am by this means advancing my own reputation, as the world will learn from hence, that my friends not only have it in their power to enjoy such an honourable post, but to dispose of it. I readily therefore comply with your generous request; and as your name is not yet entered upon the roll, I can without difficulty insert Silvanus's in its stead: and may he accept this good office at your hands with the same grateful disposition that I am sure you will receive mine. Farewell.

Epist.

Epist. IX. PLINY to MINUTIANUS.

I Can now give you a full account of the great fatigue I underwent in the public cause of the province of Bætica ; a cause which turned upon a variety of facts, and took up several days. Cæcilius Classicus was governor of Bætica, the year that Marius Priscus enjoyed the same honour in Africa. Cæcilius was a man of a base abandoned character, and had exercised his authority with great violence and oppression. He was a native of Africa, as Priscus was of Bætica ; in allusion to which these people used archly to say, (as resentment often gives a certain agreeable sprightliness), *we are paid in our own coin*. The only difference between them was, that Marius was prosecuted by a single city, and several private persons ; whereas the charge against Classicus was brought by the whole united province of Bætica. He escaped, however, the consequences of this impeachment, either by an accidental or voluntary death, I know not which. It is certain at least, the world threw upon him the imputation of the latter ; though I must confess that point is to me extremely doubtful. For as, on the one hand, it is in general reasonable to suppose, that any man should rather chuse to die, than be arraigned of a crime which he could not clear himself of ; so, on the other, it is surprising, that he who was not ashamed to commit so base an action, should yet have courage enough to prefer death to the disgrace of a public conviction. Nevertheless, the Bætici persisted in going on with the prosecution. This privilege, of which the laws admit, was now, after long dispute, revived in the present instance. They went farther, and insisted that his accomplices should likewise be proceeded against at the same time. I

was counsel for the province, together with Lucceius Albinus, who was joined with me. He is a copious and elegant orator; and though I always loved him, yet being associated with him in this cause, has considerably heightened my affection for him. There is something in the pursuit of fame, especially of the eloquent kind, that is selfish, unsociable, and jealous of participation; but there was no rivalry between us, and we united our joint efforts in the management of this cause, without giving into any separate or private views of our own. We thought the point in question was of too much importance, and of too complicated a nature, for each of us to be limited to a single speech. We were apprehensive we should neither have strength, nor time, to make good our charge against so many parties, if we comprised them all under one general accusation. Such a variety of persons and facts would be apt to confound, as well as weary the attention of the judges. Besides, in that collective way of proceeding, either the interest of some might prove a protection to all the rest; or the most inconsiderable of the party might be sacrificed to the justice of their country, in order to favour the escape of those of a more conspicuous rank, for partiality never exerts itself with more success, than when it is concealed under the specious appearance of severity. We remembered the advice of Sertorius, who directed the strongest soldier to tear off the horse's tail at once, and the weakest to pull it off hair by hair.—But you know the story. In the same manner we thought we had no other way to cope with such a numerous body of criminals, but by attacking them singly. Our first and principal point was to prove *Classicus* guilty, which would prepare the way to his accomplices; for till that was done, it would not be possible to fix any thing upon them.

them. Amongst these we singled out Bæbius Probus, and Fabius Hispanus, whom we thought proper to join with Classicus: these persons were considerable by their interest, and Hispanus in particular by his eloquence. There was no difficulty in proving the charge against Classicus, for there was found among his papers an account under his own hand of the several sums he had taken, and upon what occasions. A letter was also produced which he sent to one of his mistresses at Rome, wherein he expresses himself in these words: *Rejoice with me, for I am preparing to return to you; and in such a manner as to have nothing to fear from my creditors, having raised four millions of sesterces upon the Bætica.* But it cost us much time and pains to make good the articles against Hispanus and Probus. Before I came to the particular crimes alleged against them, I thought it extremely necessary to prove, that to be the agents and ministers of a governor in matters manifestly unjust, was in itself criminal. For they did not pretend to deny the fact, but pleaded in their excuse, that they were officers under Classicus, and therefore obliged to obey his orders. Claudius Restitutus, who was counsel on their side, assured me, he never was more perplexed and confounded than when he perceived I had seized this post, in which he had placed all his strength and confidence; though no man is more expert and vigilant in his profession, or more prepared against a surprise. The senate decreed, that an account should be taken of what effects Classicus was possessed of before he went into his government, which should be given to his daughter, and directed the overplus to be divided among the unhappy sufferers. The decree added farther, that his creditors should refund whatever monies they had received since his return. Hispanus and Probus were sentenced to

be banished for five years: so very atrocious did that conduct now appear, which seemed at first to be doubted whether it was criminal or not. A few days afterwards we proceeded against Clavius Fuscus, who married the daughter of Clasticus, and Stillonius Priscus, who commanded a troop under him; but with very different success: for the former was acquitted, and the latter banished Italy for two years. At the third hearing, we thought it advisable to join several accomplices in one general charge, lest by protracting this affair any longer, even justice herself should be quite spent and worn out. We had indeed designedly reserved the most inconsiderable of the persons concerned to this day; the wife of Clasticus only excepted, against whom, though there was strong suspicion, the proofs were by no means thought clear: as to his daughter, who was likewise in the number of the accused, there was not the least ground to charge any thing upon her. When therefore in the conclusion of the pleadings I was to take notice of her, I thought it would ill become me to bear hard upon one who appeared to be innocent; and therefore I spoke very fully and freely in her favour, as there was now no danger that this would take off from the weight of the accusation, as it might have done if I had mentioned it in the outset of the cause. I addressed myself to the deputies, and desired they would tell me if they had any thing to allege against her, which they thought they could prove; and appealed to the senate whether I ought to employ my eloquence, if in truth I had any, to the destruction of the innocent: and I concluded with saying, *But perhaps I shall be asked, if I take upon myself to act as a judge? By no means: I consider myself however as an advocate chosen out from amidst that venerable body.*

Thus

Thus ended this cause, in which so many parties were concerned, some of whom were acquitted, but the greater number condemned, either to perpetual banishment, or for a limited time. The senate were pleased in the same decree to honour us with a very ample testimony in our favour, by expressing their approbation of our diligent, faithful, and resolute behaviour in the management of this trial: the only reward equal to so laborious a task. You will easily conceive the fatigue we underwent in speaking and debating so long and so often, and in examining, assisting, and confuting such a number of witnesses; as well as what a difficult and disagreeable task we had, to withstand the private solicitations and public opposition of the friends of the accused. To give you an instance: One of the judges themselves, who thought I pressed too hard upon a party whom he favoured, could not forbear interrupting me; *Give me leave, said I, to go on; for when I have said all I can, he will still be as innocent, as he was before.* From hence you will collect what a scene of contention I went through, and what enemies I brought upon myself. However, it was but for a season. For though honesty may for the time offend those it opposes, yet it will at last be justified and admired, even by the very persons who suffer from it.

Thus I have laid before you, in the clearest manner I am able, this whole transaction. You will regret, perhaps, the reading so long a letter, and tell me it was scarce worth the trouble. Ask me then no more what is doing at Rome; and remember, in my excuse, that considering the time this trial took up, the great number of persons concerned, and the several proceedings against them, my letter is of no unreasonable length: and I really think I have related the whole with as much brevity as exactness.—But upon recol-

lection

Thus

lection I find I must recall that last word; for I perceive, a little too late indeed, that I have omitted a material circumstance. However, I will mention it here, though something out of its place. In this I have the authority of Homer, and several other great names to keep me in countenance; and the critics will tell you this irregular manner has its beauties: but, upon my word, it is a beauty I had not at all in my view. One of the witnesses, whether in resentment that he was summoned contrary to his inclination, or that he was suborned by some of the parties accused to weaken the credit of the charge, desired leave to exhibit articles against Norbanus Licinianus, one of the deputies, and a commissioner appointed to carry on the present prosecution, alleging, that he had prevaricated in his charge against Casta, the wife of Clasicus. The laws direct, that the party accused shall be first proceeded against, before any information shall be received to the prejudice of the person who brings the charge; because, how far he is to be credited will best appear from the accusation itself. But so extremely odious was Norbanus, that neither the authority of the laws, nor a regard to his public function, could protect him. He was a man of an infamous character, who, like many others, had used his interest with Domitian to very vile purposes. He was appointed one of the commissioners by the province to manage this trial, not because they had any opinion of his integrity, but as being a declared enemy to Clasicus, by whom he had been banished. Norbanus desired he might have time allowed him for his defence, and a copy of the articles of his accusation. Both which were refused him, and he was ordered to answer immediately to the charge. He did so; and when I consider his character, I know not whether I should say with great impudence, or
great

great courage, but undoubtedly with great readiness. There were many things alleged against him, much more to his disadvantage than the crime with which he was particularly charged. Among the rest, Pomponius Rufus, and Libo Frugi, persons of consular dignity, deposed, that he was counsel, in the reign of Domitian, for those infamous wretches who had informed against Salvius Liberalis. In short, Norbanus was condemned and banished. When therefore I came to speak against Casta, I insisted singly upon this sentence against Norbanus. But I urged this to little purpose; for, by a very unprecedented and indeed a contradictory way of proceeding, the person accused was acquitted, while he who had entered into this combination in her favour, was condemned. You will be curious to be informed how we, who were counsel against her, acted in this extraordinary conjuncture. We acquainted the senate, that as we had received all our instructions from Norbanus, we could not, if he should be convicted of collusion with this woman, proceed without new ones. After this, during all his trial, we sat down, without intermeddling in the affair. Norbanus, after his conviction, continued present throughout the whole proceedings, and preserved the same resolution, or impudence to the last. And here, upon reviewing my letter, I find I have been guilty of another omission. I should have told you, that Salvius Liberalis inveighed strongly against the rest of the deputies, insisting, that they had betrayed the trust reposed in them by the province, and had not brought to justice all the parties they were directed to prosecute. As he is a man of great warmth of temper and much eloquence, they were really in some danger. But I took those worthy persons under my protection, and they are so grateful as to acknowledge I saved them from

from the storm with which they were threatened. And now, my friend, I will put an end to my letter in good earnest; and will not detain you with adding a syllable more, even though I should find some circumstances have still escaped me. Farewell.

Epist. X. PLINY to SPURINNA and COCCIA *.

WHEN I paid my last visit to you, I did not acquaint you, that I had composed something in praise of your son; because it was not written for the sake of ostentation, but merely as a private tribute of affection to his memory, and as a consolation to me in my concern for the loss of him. Besides, my dear Spurrinna, as you told me you heard I had recited, I imagined you were informed at the same time of the subject; and I was unwilling to cast a gloom upon your cheerfulness in that season of gaiety in which I found you, by recalling to your remembrance so severe a misfortune. I have even still some doubt, whether I should only send you what I then recited, or join with it what I design for another essay: for a single tract was not only insufficient to give due scope to the sentiments of my heart, and to comprise the full offerings I would pay to one whose memory I so infinitely love and honour; but it seemed also more for the interest of his fame, to have it thus spread by separate pieces. But the consideration, that it will be treating you with a more friendly openness to transmit to you the whole now, rather than reserve part of it to another time, has determined me to do so; especially as you have assured me you will not part with it out of your hands, till I think proper to send it abroad. I beg you would give me an in-

* Spurrinna's wife.

stance of the same unreserved freedom, by pointing out to me what you shall judge would be best altered, omitted, or added. It is difficult (and I know it by what I feel myself) for a mind in affliction to attend to such little cares. However, as you would direct a painter or statuary who was representing the figure of your son, what parts he would retouch or express, so I hope you will guide and inform my hand in this more durable, or (as you are pleased to think it) this immortal picture of his mind, which I am endeavouring to draw: for the nearer it shall resemble the original, and the more finished it shall be, so much the more lasting it is likely to prove. Farewell.

Epist. XI. PLINY to JULIUS GENITOR.

IT is the generous disposition of our friend Artemidorus to exaggerate the good offices of his friends; and in that light you must look upon those strong professions he makes of his obligations to me. It is true, indeed, when the philosophers were expelled Rome, I went to see him at his house near the city, and I ran the greater hazard in paying him that visit, as I was at that time prætor. I likewise supplied him with a considerable sum to discharge some debts he had contracted upon very glorious occasions, though I was obliged to borrow the money myself; while his other friends, who both in power and fortune were capable of assisting him, stood calmly at a distance without contributing any relief to his distress. This I did under the discouraging instances before my eyes of the sufferings of seven of my friends; Senecio, Rusticus, and Helvidus being just then put to death, at the same time that Mauricus, Gratilla, Arria, and Fannia were sent into exile. And scorched as I
was

was with the lightning of the state, which thus flashed round me, I had great reason to expect it would not be long before it destroyed me too. But I do not esteem myself upon that account, as meriting the high encomiums my friend bestows upon me: all I pretend to is, that I was not guilty of the infamous meanness of abandoning him in his misfortunes. I had, as far as the difference of our ages would admit, a friendship for his father-in-law Musonius, whom I both loved and esteemed. Artemidorus himself I made acquaintance with, when I was military tribune in Syria, where I entered into the strictest intimacy with him. And I value myself upon having given this first mark of something right in my disposition, that I so early discovered the merit of this amiable man, who if he is not a philosopher, exceedingly resembles one; I am sure at least, of all those who take upon themselves that title, I know none of a more sincere and unaffected integrity. I forbear to mention how patient he is of heat and cold, how indefatigable in labour, how abstemious in the pleasures of the table, and how absolutely he restrains all his appetites; for these qualities, considerable as they would certainly be in any other character, are rendered less conspicuous to him, by the superior lustre of those more extraordinary virtues which recommended him to Musonius for a son-in-law, in preference to so many others of all ranks who paid their addresses to his daughter. I cannot therefore but be highly sensible of the advantageous terms in which he speaks of me to every body, and particularly to you. But I am apprehensive (to return to the observation with which I set out), that the warmth of his generous benevolence may carry him beyond the bounds I deserve: for he, who is so free from all other errors, is extremely apt to fall into this good-natured

tured one, of over-rating the merit of his friends.
Farewell.

Epist. XII. PLINY to CATILIUS.

I Will accept of your invitation to sup with you, but upon this express condition, that the supper be short and frugal. Let our entertainment, like the conversation of Socrates, abound only in philosophical conference; and even that too with moderation. There are certain midnight parties, which Cato himself could not safely fall in with; though I must confess at the same time, that J. Cæsar, when he reproaches him upon that head, exalts the character he endeavours to expose: for he describes those persons who met this reeling patriot, as blushing when they discovered who he was; and adds, *You would have thought, that Cato had detested them, and not they Cato.* Could he place the dignity of Cato in a stronger light, than by representing him thus venerable, even in his cups? As for ourselves nevertheless, let temperance not only spread our table, but regulate our hours: for we are not arrived at so high a reputation, that our enemies cannot censure us but to our honour. Farewell.

Epist. XIII. PLINY to ROMANUS.

IN compliance with your desire, I have sent you the panegyric I spoke, when lately consul, in honour of the best of princes, and I would have done so, though you had not demanded it. I could wish when you peruse it, you would consider the difficulty, as well as the dignity of the subject. In other compositions, where the reader is not acquainted with the subject, the novelty of it engages his chief attention; but in a to-

pic so known and exhausted as this, he has nothing to divert him from considering the style and manner of his author, which he is at full leisure to contemplate: and the writer has a hard task to please his readers, when the whole force of their criticism is directed to that single point. But I should be glad they would have in view the disposition, the figures, and connections I have observed in this discourse. A strong imagination, and pompous expression will sometimes break out in the most unpolished writer; but regularity in the plan of a work, and propriety in the figures, is the distinguishing mark and particular privilege of an improved genius. The shining and the elevated is not always to be pursued. As shades in a picture shew the luminous parts to more advantage, so the plain and simple in writing recommends and heightens the sublime. But I forget that I am talking to one who is so complete a judge of these matters. I should rather beg of you to point out to me what you shall think requires correction: for if I find you dislike some parts, I shall be more inclined to believe you approve of the rest. Farewell.

Epist. XIV. PLINY TO ACILIUS.

THE barbarous manner in which Largius Macedo, a person of prætorian rank, has been lately treated by his slaves, is so extremely tragical, that it deserves to be the subject of something more considerable than a private letter; though at the same time it must be acknowledged, there was a haughtiness and severity in his treatment of them, which shewed him little mindful that his own father was once in the same station. They surrounded him as he was bathing, at his villa near Formiæ, and some beat him about the face and head, whilst others trampled

pled upon his breast, his belly, and his privy parts: when they imagined they had thus completed their intentions, they threw him upon the burning pavement of the hot bath, to try if there was any remaining life left in him. He lay there stretched out, and motionless, either as really senseless, or counterfeiting to be so; upon which they concluded him actually dead. In this condition they brought him out, pretending that he had fainted away by the heat of the bath. Some of his more trusty servants received him, and the alarm being spread through the family, his mistresses ran to him with the most violent shrieks. The noise of their cries, together with the fresh air, brought him a little to himself, and he gave signs, (as he now safely might), that he was not quite dead. The murderers immediately made their escape; but the greater part of them are taken, and they are in pursuit of the rest. By proper application he was, with great difficulty, kept alive for a few days, and then expired; having however the satisfaction before he died of seeing just vengeance inflicted on his assassins. Thus you see to what indignities, outrages, and dangers we are exposed. Lenity and good treatment is no security from the villanies of your servants; for it is malice, and not reflection that arms such ruffians against their masters. — So much for this piece of news: and now, I think, I am exhausted. But you will be apt, I imagine, to ask, “Is this all?” In truth it is; otherwise, you should have it; for my paper and my time too (as it is a holyday with me) will allow me to add more. Upon recollection, however, I can tell you one farther circumstance relating to Macedo, which just now occurs to me. As he was once in a public bath at Rome, a remarkable, and (as it should seem by the manner of his death) an ominous accident happened to

him. A slave of Macedo's, in order to make way for his master, laid his hand gently upon a Roman knight, who suddenly turning round, by mistake gave Macedo so violent a blow, that he almost knocked him down. Thus the bath seems to have been fatal to him by a kind of gradation; for first he received an indignity, and afterwards lost his life there. Farewell.

Epist. XV. PLINY to PROCUS.

YOU desire me to read your poems in my retirement, and to examine whether they are worthy of being published. You use entreaties; you quote authorities; and you ask me to subtract some spare time from my own studies, to bestow it upon yours. You farther add, that Tully was remarkable for his generous encouragement and patronage of poetical geniuses. But you did not do me justice, if you supposed I wanted either entreaty or example upon this occasion, who not only honour the muses with the most religious regard, but have also the warmest friendship for yourself: I shall therefore do what you require, with as much pleasure as care. I believe I may venture to declare beforehand, that your performance is extremely beautiful, and ought by no means to be suppressed; at least that was my opinion when I heard you recite it: if indeed your manner did not impose upon me; for the skill and harmony of your elocution is certainly enchanting. I trust however, the charming cadence did not entirely overcome the force of my criticism; it might possibly a little soften its severity, but could not totally, I imagine, disarm me of it. I think therefore I may now safely pronounce my opinion of your poems in general; what they are in their several parts, I shall judge when I read them. Farewell.

Epist.

Epist. XVI. PLINY to NEPOS.

I Have constantly observed, that amongst the noble actions and remarkable sayings of illustrious persons of both sexes, those which have been most celebrated have not always been the most illustrious; and I am confirmed in this opinion, by a conversation I had yesterday with Fannia. This lady is grand-daughter to that celebrated Arria, who animated her husband to meet death, by her own glorious example. She informed me of several particulars relating to Arria, not less heroical than this famous action of hers, though less taken notice of; which I am persuaded will raise your admiration as much as they did mine. Her husband Cæcinna Pætus, and her son, were both at the same time attacked with a dangerous illness, of which the son died. This youth, who had a most beautiful person and amiable behaviour, was not less endeared to his parents by his virtues than by the ties of affection. His mother managed his funeral so privately that Pætus did not know of his death. Whenever she came into his bed-chamber, she pretended her son was better; and as often as he inquired after his health, would answer, that he had rested well, or had ate with an appetite. When she found she could no longer restrain her grief, but her tears were gushing out, she would leave the room, and having given vent to her passion, return again with dry eyes and a serene countenance, as if she had dismissed every sentiment of sorrow at her entrance. The * action was, no doubt, truly noble, when
drawing

* The story, as mentioned by several of the ancient historians, is to this purpose: Pætus having joined
K 3 Scribonianus,

drawing the dagger she plunged it in her breast, and then presented it to her husband with that ever memorable, I had almost said that divine expression, *Pætus, it is not painful*. It must however be considered, when she spoke and acted thus, she had the prospect of immortal glory before her eyes to encourage and support her. But was it not something much greater, without the view of such powerful motives, to hide her tears, to conceal her grief, and cheerfully seem the mother when she was so no more?

Scribonianus had taken up arms in Illyria against Claudius, where having lost his life, Pætus, who was of his party, was brought prisoner to Rome. When they were going to put him on board a ship, Arria besought the soldiers that she might be permitted to go with him: *Certainly*, said she, *you cannot refuse a man of consular dignity, as he is, a few slaves to wait upon him; but if you will take me, I alone will perform that office*. This favour, however, she could not obtain; upon which she hired a small fishing-vessel, and boldly ventured to follow the ship. At her return to Rome, she met the wife of Scribonianus in the emperor's palace, who pressing her to discover all she knew of that insurrection, *What!* said she, *shall I regard thy advice, who saw thy husband murdered even in thy very arms, and yet survivest him?* An expression which plainly shews, that the noble manner in which she put

Scribonianus, who was in arms in Illyria against Claudius, was taken after the death of the latter, and condemned to death. Arria, having in vain solicited his life, persuaded him to destroy himself, rather than suffer the ignominy of falling by the executioner's hands; and in order to encourage him to an act, to which it seems he was not much inclined, she set him the example in the manner Pliny relates.

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an end to her life, was no unpremeditated effect of sudden passion. When Thrasea, who married her daughter, was dissuading her from her purpose of destroying herself, and among other arguments which he used, said to her, *Would you then advise your daughter to die with me, if my life were to be taken from me? Most certainly I would,* she replied, *if she had lived as long and in as much harmony with you, as I have with my Pætus.* His answer greatly heightened the alarm of her family, and made them observe her for the future more narrowly; which when she perceived, she assured them, all their caution would be to no purpose. *You may oblige me,* said she, *to execute my resolution in a way that will give me more pain, but it is impossible you should prevent it.* She had scarce said this, when she sprang from her chair, and running her head with the utmost violence against the wall, she fell down, in appearance dead. But being brought to herself, *I told you,* said she, *if you would not suffer me to take the easy paths to death, I should make my way to it through some more difficult passage.* Now, is there not, my friend, something much greater in all this, than the so-much talked of, *Pætus, it is not painful?* to which, indeed, it seems to have led the way: and yet this last is the favourite topic of fame, while all the former are passed over in profound silence. Whence I cannot but infer, what I observed in the beginning of my letter, that the most famous actions are not always the most noble. Farewell.

Epist. XVII. PLINY to SERVIANUS.

IT is so long since I heard from you, that I must ask, if all things are right? If they are, is business your obstruction? Or, if you are not employed, are the opportunities of writing few or none?

none? Deliver me from this state of doubt: it is a situation I cannot bear. Relieve me though you send your letters by a particular messenger. I will pay his travelling-expenses: nay, I will give him more; let him but tell me what I wish to hear. I am well, if a man can be said to be well who lives in perpetual suspense and anxiety, expecting and fearing, every hour, all that can possibly happen to his dearest friend upon earth. Farewell.

Epist. XVIII. PLINY to SEVERUS.

IT was a duty incumbent upon me in quality of consul, to return the thanks, and to make the compliments of the republic to the Emperor; but after I had performed that ceremony in the senate in the usual manner, and as fully as the time and place would allow, I thought it agreeable to the affection of a good subject, to enlarge those general heads, and extend them into a complete discourse. My principal view in doing so, was, to confirm the emperor in his virtues, by paying that tribute of applause to them which they so justly deserve; and at the same time to direct future princes, not in the formal way of lecture, but by his more engaging example, to those paths they must pursue, if they would attain the same heights of glory. To instruct princes how to form their conduct, is a noble, but difficult task, and may, perhaps, be esteemed a presumption: but to applaud the character of an accomplished emperor, and to hold him out to posterity, as a light to guide succeeding monarchs, is a method equally useful, and much more modest. It afforded me a very singular pleasure when I recited this panegyric, that my friends gave me their company, though I did not solicit them in the usual form of circular billets, but only

only desired their attendance, if it would be agreeable to them, and they were entirely disengaged. You know the excuses which are generally made at Rome to avoid invitations of this kind; yet, though the weather proved extremely bad at that time, they attended the recital for two days together; and when I thought it would be unreasonable to detain them any longer, they insisted upon my going through with it the next day. Shall I consider this as an honour paid to myself or to polite literature? Rather let me suppose to the latter, which, though well nigh extinct, seems to be now again reviving amongst us. Yet what was the subject which raised this uncommon attention? No other than what formerly, even in the senate, where we were obliged to submit to it, we could not endure to hear, though but for a few moments. But now, you see, we have patience to recite and attend to a topic of the same nature for three days together: and the reason of the difference is, not that we have more eloquence, but more liberty than formerly, and consequently write with more spirit. It is an additional glory therefore to our present emperor, that this sort of harangues, which were once as odious as they were false, are now as pleasing as they are sincere. But it was not only the earnest attention of my audience which afforded me pleasure; I was greatly delighted too with the justness of their taste: for I observed, that the more nervous parts of my discourse gave them much satisfaction. It is true, indeed, this work, which was written for the perusal of the world in general, was read only to a few; however, I would willingly look upon their particular judgment as an earnest of that of the public, and rejoice at their manly taste as if it were universally spread. It was in eloquence as in music, the vitiated ears of the audience introduced a depraved style; but
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now, I am inclined to hope, as a more refined judgment prevails in the public, our compositions of both kinds will improve too; for those authors whose only view is to please, will form their works upon the general taste of the people. I imagine, however, in subjects of this nature the florid style is most proper; and am so far from thinking that the gay colouring I have used, will be esteemed foreign and unnatural, that I am most apprehensive that censure will fall upon those parts where I have been most plain and unornamented. Nevertheless I sincerely wish the time may come (and would to heaven it now were!) when the smooth and luscious manner which has infected our style, shall give place, as it ought, to severe and chaste composition.—Thus I have given you an account how I have been employed these last three days, that your absence might not entirely deprive you of a pleasure, which, from your friendship to me, and the part you take in every thing that concerns the interest of learning, I know you would have received, if you had been present. Farewell.

Epist. XIX. PLINUS to CALVISIUS RUFUS.

I Must apply to you, according to my custom, in an affair which concerns my finances. Some lands which lie contiguous to mine, and indeed are intermixed with them, are offered to be sold. There are several circumstances which strongly incline me to this purchase, as there are others no less weighty which deter me from it. The first recommendation this estate has, is, the agreeableness of its joining to me; the next, the advantage as well as the pleasure of being able to visit it under one trouble and expense; to have it looked after by the same steward, and cultivated almost by the same husbandmen; and to have
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only one villa to maintain, as it will be sufficient to keep up the other just in common repair. I take into this account furniture, housekeepers, gardeners, artificers, and all the apparatus that relates to the game, as it saves a very considerable expense when you are not obliged to keep them at more houses than one. On the other hand, I do not know whether it is prudent to venture so much of one's property under the same climate, and to the same casualties; it seems a more sure method of guarding against the caprices of fortune, to distribute one's possessions into different situations: besides, there is something extremely amusing in shifting the scene, and travelling from one estate to another. But to mention the point of principal difficulty: the lands are rich, fertile, and well watered, consisting chiefly of meadow-grounds, vineyards, and woods, the produce of which, though it is not very great, or very profitable, yet seldom fails: but then, to balance the advantages of soil, the present tenants have been extremely oppressed. The person who was last in possession used frequently to seize and sell their stock, by which means, though he lessened the debt for the present, yet in the event he greatly impoverished the estate, and the consequence was that they were again in arrears. I shall be obliged therefore to furnish these honest farmers with a new supply of hands for tillage, which I must be at the expense of buying, as there are none left upon the estate, neither have I any bond-slaves of my own. And now it remains only to inform you of the price, which is three millions of sesterces. It has been formerly sold for five millions, but partly by the general calamity of the times, and partly by its being thus stripped of labourers, the income of this estate is reduced, and consequently its value. You will be inclined, perhaps, to inquire whether I can easily raise the

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the purchase-money? It is true, indeed, my estate is chiefly in land, though I have some money placed out at interest; but I can without difficulty borrow any sum I have occasion for. I have always a sure resource in the purse of my wife's mother, which I can use with the same freedom as my own; so that you need not give yourself any trouble as to that article, if you should have no other objections, which I beg you would very maturely consider: for as in every thing else, so particularly in matters of œconomy, no man has more judgment and experience than yourself. Farewell.

Epist. XX. PLINY TO MAXIMUS.

DO you remember to have read of the many commotions that were occasioned by the law which directs that the elections of magistrates shall be by balloting, and how much the author of it was both approved and condemned? Yet this very law the senate lately unanimously received, and upon the election-day, with one consent, called for the ballots. It must be owned, the method by open votes had introduced into the senate more riot and disorder than is seen even in the assemblies of the people; all regularity in speaking, all decency of silence, all dignity of character was broke through; and it was universal dissonance and clamour: here, the several candidates running from side to side with their patrons; there, a troop collected together in the middle of the senate-house; and, in short, the whole assembly divided into separate parties, created the most indecent confusion. Thus widely had we departed from the manners of our ancestors, who conducted these elections with a calmness and regularity suitable to the reverence which is due to the majesty of the senate. I have been
informed

informed by some who remember those times, that the method observed in their assemblies was this: the name of the person who offered himself for any office being called over, a profound silence ensued, when immediately the candidate appeared, who after he had spoke for himself, and given an account to the senate of his life and manners, called witnesses in support of his character. These were, either the person under whom he had served in the army, or to whom he had been quaestor, or both, (if the case admitted of it), to whom he also joined some of those friends who espoused his interest. They delivered what they had to say in his favour, in few words, but with great dignity: and this had far more influence than the modern method of humble solicitation. Sometimes the candidate would object either to the birth, or age, or character of his competitor; to which the senate would listen with a severe and impartial attention: and thus was merit generally preferred to interest. But corruption having abused this wise institution of our ancestors, we were obliged to have recourse to the way of balloting, as the most probable remedy for this evil. The method being new, and immediately put in practice, it answered the present purpose very well; but, I am afraid, in process of time it will introduce new inconveniencies; as this manner of balloting seems to afford a sort of screen to injustice and partiality. For how few are there who preserve the same delicacy of conduct in secret, as when exposed to the view of the world? The truth is, the generality of mankind revere Fame more than Conscience. But this, perhaps, may be pronouncing too hastily upon a future contingency: be it therefore as it may, we have in the mean while obtained by this method an election of such magistrates as best deserved the honour. For it was with us as with those sort of judges

who are named upon the spot, we were taken before we had time to be biased, and therefore determined impartially.

I have given you this detail, not only as a piece of news; but because I am glad to seize every opportunity of speaking of the republic; a subject, which as we have fewer occasions of mentioning than our ancestors, so we ought to be more careful not to let any of them slip. In good earnest, I am tired with repeating over and over the same compliments, *How do ye do?* and, *I hope you are well.* Why should our letters for ever turn upon trivial and domestic concerns? It is true, indeed, the direction of the public weal is in the hands of a single person, who, for the general good, takes upon himself solely to ease us of the care and weight of government; but still that bountiful source of power permits, by a very generous dispensation, some streams to flow down to us: and of these we may not only taste ourselves, but thus, as it were, administer them to our absent friends. Farewell.

Epist. XXI. PLINY to PRISCUS.

I Have just received an account of the death of Valerius Martial, which gives me much affliction. He was an acute, sprightly, ingenious man, and his writings abound with an agreeable spirit of wit and satire, conducted at the same time by great candour and good nature. When he left Rome, I made him a present to defray the charges of his journey, which I gave him, not only as a testimony of my friendship, but in return for the verses with which he had complimented me. It was the custom of the ancients to distinguish those poets with honourable and pecuniary rewards, who had celebrated particular persons or cities in their verses: but this generous practice, with every

every other that is fair and noble, is now grown out of fashion; and in consequence of having ceased to act laudably, we consider applause as an impertinent and worthless tribute. You will be desirous, perhaps, to see the verses which merited this acknowledgment from me; and I believe I can, from my memory, partly satisfy your curiosity, without referring you to his works: but if you are pleased with this specimen of them, you must turn to his poems for the rest. He addresses himself to his muse, whom he directs to go to my house upon the *Esquilæ*; but to approach me with respect:

*Go, wanton muse, but go with care,
Nor meet, ill tim'd, my Pliny's ear.
He, by sage Minerva taught,
Gives the day to studious thought,
And plans that eloquence divine,
Which shall to future ages shine,
And rival, wondrous Tully! thine.
Then, cautious, watch the vacant hour,
When Bacchus reigns in all his pow'r;
When crown'd with rosy chaplets gay,
E'en rigid Cato read my lay *.*

Do you not think that the poet who wrote in such terms of me, deserved some friendly marks of my bounty then, and that he merits my sorrow now? For he gave me the most he could, and it was want of power only, if his present was not more valuable. But to say truth, what higher can be conferred on man than honour, and applause, and immortality?—And though it should be granted, that his poems will not be immortal, still, no doubt, he composed them upon the contrary supposition. Farewell.

* Val. Mart. l. x. 19.

B O O K IV.

Epist. I. PLINY to FABATUS.

After so long an absence, you desire a visit from your grand-daughter * and myself. Nothing, be assured, could be more agreeable to us both; for we equally wish to see you, and are determined to delay that pleasure no longer. For this purpose our baggage is actually making ready, and we are hastening to you with all the expedition the roads will permit. We shall stop only once, and that for a short time; intending to turn a little out of the way in order to go into Tuscany: not for the sake of looking upon our estate, and into our family-concerns, for that we could defer to another opportunity; but to perform an indispensable duty. There is a town near my estate, called Tifer-num upon the Tiber, which put itself under my patronage when I was yet a youth. These people enter extremely into my interest, celebrate my arrival among them, express the greatest concern when I leave them, and in short, give every proof of an affection towards me as strong as it is undeserved. That I may return their good offices (for what generous mind can bear to be excelled in acts of friendship?), I have built a temple in this place, at my own expense; and as it is finished, it would be a sort of impiety to omit the dedication of it any longer. We design, therefore, to be there on the day that ceremony is to be performed, and I have resolved to celebrate it with a general feast. We may possibly continue there all the next day, but we shall make so much the more expedition upon the road. May we have the happiness to find you and your

* Calphurnia, i ny's wife.

daughter

daughter in good health ! as I am sure we shall in good spirits, if you see us safely arrived. Farewell.

Epist. II. PLINY TO CLEMENS.

Regulus has lost his son ; the only misfortune which he did not deserve, for I much doubt whether he thinks it one. The boy was of a sprightly, but ambiguous turn ; however, he seemed capable enough of steering right, if he could have avoided splitting upon his father's example. Regulus gave him his freedom, in order to entitle him to the estate left him by his mother ; and when he got into possession of it, endeavoured (as the character of the man made it generally believed) to wheedle him out of it, by the most singular and indecent complaisance. This, perhaps, you will scarce think credible ; but if you consider Regulus, you will not be long of that opinion. However, he now expresses his concern for the loss of this youth in a most outrageous manner. The boy had a great number of little coach and saddle horses ; dogs of different sorts, together with parrots, blackbirds, and nightingales in abundance : all these Regulus flew round the funeral pile of his son, in the ostentation of an affected grief. He is visited upon this occasion by a surprising number of people, who though they secretly detest and abhor him, yet are as assiduous in their attendance upon him, as if they were influenced by a principle of real esteem and affection ; or, to speak my sentiments in few words, they endeavour to recommend themselves to his favour, by following his example. He is retired to his villa cross the Tiber ; where he has covered a vast extent of ground with his porticoes, and crowded all the shore with his statues : for he blends prodigality with covetousness, and vain-

glory with infamy. By his continuing there, he lays his visitors under the great inconvenience of coming to him at this unwholesome season; and he seems to consider the trouble they put themselves to, as a matter of consolation. He gives out, with his usual absurdity, that he designs to marry. You must expect, therefore, to hear shortly of the wedding of a man oppressed with sorrow and years; that is, of one who marries both too soon and too late. Do you ask me why I conjecture thus? Certainly, not because he affirms it himself (for never was there so infamous a liar), but because there is no doubt that Regulus will do every thing he ought not. Farewell.

Epist. III. PLINY to ANTONINUS.

THAT you have been twice consul, and acted with the dignity of the ancients in that office; that few (your modesty will not suffer me to say none) ever have, or ever will come up to the integrity and wisdom of your Asiatic administration; that in virtue, in authority, and even in years you are the first of Romans; these, most certainly, are shining and noble parts of your character: nevertheless, I own, it is in your retired hours that I most admire you. To season the severity of business with the sprightliness of wit, and to temper wisdom with politeness, is as difficult as it is great: yet these uncommon qualities you have most happily united in those wonderful charms, which not only grace your conversation, but particularly distinguish your writings. Your lips, like the venerable old man's in Homer, drop honey, and one would imagine the bee had diffused her sweetness over all you compose. These were the sentiments I had when I lately read your Greek epigrams and satires. What elegance, what beauties shine in this collection!

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how sweetly the numbers flow, and how exactly are they wrought up in the true spirit of the ancients! what a vein of wit runs through every line, and how conformable is the whole to the rules of just criticism! I fancied I had got in my hands Callimachus or Herodes, or, if possible, some poet even superior to these: though indeed, neither of those authors excelled, as you have, in both those species of poetry. Is it possible, that a Roman can write Greek in so much perfection? I protest I do not believe Athens herself can be more Attic. To own the truth, I cannot but envy Greece the honour of your preference. And since you can write thus elegantly in a foreign language, it is past conjecture what you could have performed in your own. Farewell.

Epist. IV. PLINY to SOSSIUS.

I Have a most affectionate esteem for Calvisius Nepos; as indeed he is a man of indefatigable industry, great eloquence, and (what I prefer to all the rest) of consummate integrity: he is nephew to your friend and my guest Calvisius. I beg therefore you would do him and his uncle the honour of making him one of the tribunes of the soldiers. It will be an obligation to us at the same time, as well as to Nepos, whom, I am persuaded, you will think equally deserving your favour. You have bestowed numberless good offices upon many; but I will venture to say, you never conferred one that was better placed than here; and few, perhaps, so well. Farewell.

Epist. V. PLINY to SPARSUS.

IT is reported, that when Æschines, at the request of the Rhodians, read to them one of his

his orations, together with that which Demosthenes had composed upon the same occasion, they were both received with the loudest applause. I am not surpris'd that the harangues of such excellent orators should be thus warmly admired, when I consider, that even an oration of mine, which I lately recited before a very learned audience, was heard with equal earnestness and approbation, for two days successively: yet there was not the pleasure which arises from a contention between two rival pieces, to awaken their attention. The Rhodians, besides the particular merit of the orations, had the entertainment of comparing them together, to excite their curiosity; but mine had the good fortune to please, though destitute of that enlivening recommendation; whether deservedly or not, you will judge, when you read the performance; the extent of which will not permit me to introduce it to you with a longer preface. I must therefore shorten my letter, in order to reconcile you the better to the length of the speech that attends it; which, however, I have not enlarged beyond the bounds my subject requires. Farewell.

Epist. VI. PLINY to NASO.

THEY tell me, that a storm of hail has destroyed all the produce of my estate in Tuscany; while that which I have on the other side the Po, though it has proved extremely fruitful this season, yet, from the excessive cheapness of every thing, turns to small account. Laurentinum is the single possession which yields me any advantage. I have nothing there, indeed; but a house and gardens; all the rest is barren sands; still, however, my best productions rise at Laurentinum. It is there I cultivate, if
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not my lands, at least my mind, and form many a composition. As in other places I can shew you full barns; so there I can entertain you with good store of the literary kind. Let me advise you then, if you wish for a never-failing revenue, to purchase something upon this contemplative coast. Farewell.

Epist. VII. PLINY TO LEPIDUS.

I Often tell you that Regulus is a man of spirit. It is amazing how effectually he accomplishes whatever he engages in. He chose lately to be extremely concerned for the loss of his son: accordingly he mourned for him in a way which no man ever mourned before. He took it into his head that he would have several statues and representations of him: immediately all the artisans in Rome are set to work. Colours, wax, brassy, silver, ivory, marble, all exhibit the figure of young Regulus. Not long ago he read, before a numerous audience, a panegyric upon the life of his son: a large book upon the life of a boy! then a thousand transcribers were employed to copy this curious anecdote, which he dispersed all over the empire. He wrote likewise a sort of circular letter to the several decurii, to desire they would chuse out one of their order who had a strong clear voice, to read this eulogy to the people; and I am informed it has been done accordingly. Had this spirit (or whatever else you will call an earnestness in executing all one undertakes) been rightly applied, what infinite good might it have produced! The misfortune is, this active cast is generally strongest in men of vitious characters: for as ignorance begets rashness, and knowledge inspires caution; so modesty is apt to depress and weaken the great and well-formed genius, whilst boldness supports and strengthens

strengthens low and little minds. Regulus is a strong proof of the truth of this observation: he has a weak voice, an awkward address, a thick speech, a slow imagination, and no memory; in a word, he has nothing but an extravagant genius: and yet, by the assistance of this flighty turn and much impudence, he passes with many for a finished orator. Herennius Senecio revered Cato's definition of an orator, and applied it with great justice to Regulus: *An orator, said he, is a bad man unskilled in the art of speaking.* And, in good earnest, Cato's definition is not a more exact description of a true orator, than Senecio's is of the character of this man. Would you make a suitable return to this letter? let me know if you, or any of my friends in your town, have with an air of pleasantry mouthed (as Demosthenes calls it) this melancholy piece to the people, like a stroller in the market-place. For so absurd a performance must move rather laughter than compassion: and indeed the composition is as puerile as the subject. Farewell.

Epist. VIII. PLINY TO ARRIANUS.

YOU congratulate me upon my advancement to the dignity of augur; and you do it on good ground; not only as it is highly glorious to receive, even in the slightest instances, a testimony of the approbation of so wise and judicious a prince; but as it is also an ancient and sacred institution, which has this high and peculiar privilege annexed to it, that it is for life. Other sacerdotal honours, though they may perhaps equal this in dignity, yet as they are given, so they may be taken away: but fortune has no farther power over this, than to bestow it. What recommends this dignity to me still more, is, that I have the honour to succeed so illustrious a person

person as Julius Frontinus. He for many years, upon the nomination-day of proper persons to be received into the sacred college, constantly proposed me, as if he had a view to my being his successor; and since it has actually proved so in the event, I am willing to look upon it as something more than accident. But the circumstance, it seems, that most pleases you in this affair, is, that Tully enjoyed the same post; and you rejoice (you tell me) to find that I follow his steps as closely in the paths of honour, as I endeavour to do in those of eloquence. I wish, indeed, as I had the advantage to be admitted earlier into the sacred college, and consular office than Cicero, so I might, in my more advanced years, catch some spark, at least, of his divine genius! The former, as it is in the gift of man, may happen to me and to many; but the latter is an attainment much too high for my hopes, and in the disposal of heaven alone. Farewell.

Epist. IX. PLINY to URSUS.

FOR several days past the senate has been engaged in the cause of Julius Bassus, a man grown familiar with misfortunes, and rendered conspicuous by a series of calamities. In the reign of Vespasian, two private persons informed against him, and the affair being referred to the senate, it depended there a considerable time, when at last he was honourably acquitted. During the time of Titus, he was under continual apprehensions of his resentment, as being known to favour the interests of Domitian: yet when the emperor ascended the throne, Bassus was exiled; but afterwards recalled by Nerva. Having obtained the proconsulship of Bithynia, he was at his return from thence accused of bribery and extortion;

extortion; and as he was prosecuted with warmth, he was defended with vigour. The sentiments of the senate were greatly divided, however the majority were on the most favourable side. Pomponius Rufus, a person of great spirit and vivacity, was counsel against him. He was seconded by Theophanes, one of the deputies from the province, and indeed the chief promoter and inflamer of this prosecution. I began the reply; for Bassus insisted that the foundation of his defence should be laid by me. He desired me to represent the consideration that was due to his illustrious birth, and to the dangers he had undergone; that his accusers were informers by profession, who reaped considerable advantage by their trade; and to display the true reasons which rendered him odious to the seditious, and particularly to Theophanes; but above all, to confute the principal charge that was brought against him: for in all the rest, however grievous the accusation might appear, he not only deserved to be acquitted, but highly commended. The great difficulty of the case was, that, in the simplicity of his heart, he had incautiously received the gifts which some of his friends in the province (for he had been among them before as quæstor) thought proper to send him. This, which his accusers called rapine and extortion, Bassus justified under the notion of presents. But then the laws expressly forbid persons in his station, to receive any presents whatsoever. Now, what method of defence should I strike into upon this occasion? If I denied the fact, I was afraid it would look like a tacit confession that it was actually extortion: besides, to disown what was so notorious, would be to heighten rather than to extenuate the charge. And, indeed, he had put that out of the power of his counsel, if they had thought it proper; for he

he had acknowledged to several persons, and particularly to the emperor, that he had received and returned a few slight presents upon his birthday, and at the feast of the Saturnalia. Should I apply to the clemency of the senate? That would be ruining my client at once, by confessing the nature of his offence was such, that there was no other way of saving him. Should I then justify the fact? but in so doing I should have injured my own character, without rendering any service to Bassus. Under these difficulties I thought it would be best to steer a middle course; and I flatter myself I happily hit upon it. But night coming on separated, as usual, the combatants. I had spoke for three hours and a half, so that I had still an hour and a half remaining. For the law having allowed six hours to the plaintiff, and nine to the defendant, Bassus had so divided this portion of time between me and the advocate who was to speak after me, that I had five hours, and he the rest. But perceiving my speech had made a favourable impression upon the senate, I thought it would be most advisable to add nothing more; for it is not prudent, you know, to push one's success too far. Besides, I was apprehensive I should not have strength to renew the defence the next day, as it is much easier to go on without intermission, than to begin again after having rested. There was yet another consideration which had great weight with me: I was afraid that as the discontinuance of my speech would abate my own ardour; so the resumption of it might prove tiresome to my hearers. When an harangue is carried on in one continued course, the speaker best keeps up his own fire, and the attention of the audience, both which are apt to cool and grow languid upon a remission: just as a continued motion preserves the light of a torch, which, when once it is

extinct, is not easily rekindled. But Bassus, almost with tears in his eyes, earnestly pressed me to go on with his defence for the remainder of the time; which I accordingly complied with, preferring his interest to my own. And the event proved extremely favourable; for I found the attention of the senate as fresh and lively as if it had been rather animated, than fatigued by the former part of my speech. I was seconded by Luccius Albinus, who entered so thoroughly into my reasoning, that our speeches, whilst they had the variety of different and distinct orations, had the connection and uniformity of one entire harangue. Herennius Pollio replied to us with great spirit and solidity: and after him Theophanes spoke again; in this, as in every thing else, discovering his uncommon assurance, by presuming to take up the time of the senate, after two such eloquent persons, and of consular dignity, had spoke before him. He continued haranguing till evening, and even beyond it; for they called for lights. The next day Titius Hemulus, and Fronto spoke gloriously in behalf of Bassus. The fourth day was employed in examining the proofs. Bæbius Macer, the consul elect, declared Bassus guilty, within the express words of the law relating to bribery and extortion. Cæpio Hispano was of opinion, that, without affecting his dignity, the case should be referred to the ordinary judges: and both their sentiments were founded in reason. You will wonder how that can be, since they were so extremely different. But you will observe, that Macer, who considered the mere letter of the law, might very reasonably condemn him, when it appeared he had taken presents contrary to the express prohibition of that law. On the other hand, Cæpio supposing that the senate had a power, (as undoubtedly it has), to moderate or extend

extend the rigour of the laws, might upon very good grounds think this a case worthy of their clemency, as being (though indeed contrary to the express letter of the law, yet) not unfrequently practised. The motion of Cæpio prevailed; and when he rose up to give the reasons for his vote, the same acclamations attended him, as usually follow an approved speech. You will easily judge therefore, how great the applause was after he had spoke, when he received such unusual ones before he began. I find the sentiments of those without doors, as well as in the house, are divided into two parties: they who approve of Cæpio's vote, condemn Macer's as severe and hard: on the contrary, the partisans of Macer's opinion treat the other as too mild, and indeed inconsistent. They assert, it is highly absurd to send a man to be tried before the ordinary judges, and yet suffer him to retain his seat in the senate. I should have told you that there was besides those I have mentioned, a third opinion. Valerius Paulinus, who joined in sentiments with Cæpio, was for adding farther, that the senate should proceed against Theophanes, after he had finished his commission as deputy from the province. For he insisted, that Theophanes, in the course of his accusation, had been guilty of several things which fell within the prohibition of this very law, upon which he grounded his information against Bassus. But though this proposal was in general highly approved by the senate, yet the consuls thought proper to drop it: Paulinus, however, had the full credit of so honest and bold a motion. At the breaking up of the house, Bassus was received by great crouds of people with the highest demonstrations of joy, and the loudest acclamations. This new difficulty which he had fallen into, had recalled the remembrance of

his former troubles; and a name which had never been mentioned but in conjunction with some misfortune, together with the appearance of a fine person broken with sorrow and age, had raised a general compassion towards him. You may look upon this letter as the forerunner of my speech, which, full and copious as it is, I shall send you at large; but you must not expect it soon; for it is a subject of too much importance to be revised in haste. Farewell.

Epist. X. PLINY to SABINUS.

YOU write me, that Sabina, who made you and me her heirs, though she has no where expressly directed that Modestus shall have his freedom, yet has left him a legacy in the following words; *I give, &c.—to Modestus, whom I have ordered to be made free*: upon which you desire my sentiments. I have consulted upon this occasion with the most learned lawyers, and they all agree Modestus is not entitled to his liberty, since it is not expressly given, and consequently that the legacy is void, as being devised to a slave. But it appears plainly to be a mistake in the testatrix; and therefore I think we ought to act in this case as if Sabina had directed in so many words, what it is clear she imagined she had. I am persuaded you will join with me in these sentiments, who so religiously regard the will of the dead; which indeed, where it can be discovered, will always be law to an honest mind. Honour is to you and me as strong an obligation, as necessity to others. Let Modestus then enjoy his freedom and his legacy in as full a manner, as if Sabina had observed all the requisite forms; as indeed they effectually do, who chuse their heirs with discretion. Farewell.

Epist.

Epist. XI. PLINY TO MINUTIANUS.

HAve you heard that Licinianus professes rhetoric in Sicily? I scarce believe you heard it, for the news is but just arrived. This unfortunate person, who lately enjoyed the dignity of prætor, and was esteemed the most eloquent of our advocates, is now fallen from a senator to an exile, from an orator to a teacher of rhetoric. Licinianus himself took notice of this sad change, in a strong pathetic speech which he made at the opening of his school. *Oh fortune, said he, how capriciously dost thou sport with mankind! Thou makest rhetoricians of senators, and senators of rhetoricians!* a sarcasm so full of gall, that one might almost imagine he fixed upon this profession merely for the sake of an opportunity of applying it. Being dressed, when he first appeared in the chair, after the Grecian fashion, (for exiles are not permitted to wear the Roman gown), *Alas,* says he, looking upon his habit, *I am going to declaim in Latin!* You will say, perhaps this situation, wretched and deplorable as it is, is what he well deserves for having thrown so vile a stain upon his profession by his abominable lewdness. It is true, indeed, he confessed the crime with which he was charged; but whether it was from a consciousness of his guilt, or from an apprehension of worse consequences if he denied it, is not clear; for Domitian's vengeance generally raged with the greatest fury, where his evidence failed him most. That emperor had determined that Cornelia Maximilla, one of the Vestal virgins, should be buried alive, from an extravagant notion that those kind of exemplary severities did honour to his reign. Accordingly in the character of high priest, or rather indeed in that of a lawless and cruel tyrant, he convened the sacred

college, not in the pontifical court, where they usually assemble, but at his villa near Alba; and there (by a sentence no less wicked, as it was passed when she was not present to defend herself, than as it was the effect of passion and revenge) he condemned her of having violated her Vestal vow. Yet he himself had been guilty, not only of debauching his brother's daughter, but was also accessory to her death: for that lady being a widow, in order to conceal her shame, endeavoured to procure an abortion, and by that means lost her life. However, the priests were directed to see the sentence immediately performed upon Cornelia. As they were leading her to the place of execution, she called upon Vesta, and the rest of the gods, to attest her virtue; and amongst other exclamations, frequently cried out, *Is it possible that Cæsar can think me polluted, under the influence of whose sacred functions he has conquered and triumphed?* Whether she said this in flattery or derision; whether it proceeded from a consciousness of her innocence, or contempt of the emperor, is not certain; but she continued exclaiming in this manner, till she came to the place of execution, to which she was led at least like a criminal, though perhaps not really one. As she was going down into the subterraneous cavern, her gown hung upon something in the way; upon which turning back to disengage it, the executioner offered her his hand, which she refused with some horror, as if she could not touch it without impurity. Thus she preserved the appearance of a consummate chastity to the concluding scene of her life,

And her last care was decently to fall.

Celer likewise, a Roman knight, who was accused of being her gallant, during the whole time
his

his sentence was executing upon him, in the square near the senate-house, persisted in saying, *What crime have I been guilty of? I have been guilty of none.* These professions of innocence had fixed upon the character of Domitian the imputation of cruelty and injustice, and therefore extremely exasperated him. Licinianus then, being seized by the emperor's orders for having carried off a freed-woman of Cornelia's to one of his seats, was advised, by the persons who had the custody of him, to confess the fact, if he hoped to obtain favour, and avoid the last punishment; which he accordingly did. Herennius Senecio spoke for him in his absence, something in that abrupt manner in which Antilochus in Homer relates the death of Patroclus: *Dead is Patroclus! Instead of an advocate, said he, I must turn informer: Licinianus is fled!* This news was so agreeable to Domitian, that he could not forbear betraying his satisfaction: *Then, says he, has Licinianus acquitted us of injustice in this charge; but we will not urge his confusion too far.* He accordingly permitted him to carry off such of his effects as he could secure before they were seized for the use of the public, and made his banishment easy, as a sort of reward for the complaisance of this voluntary confession. Licinianus was afterwards, by the clemency of the emperor Nerva, permitted to fix in Sicily, where he now professes rhetoric, and inveighs against the caprices of fortune.—You see how obedient I am to your commands, by sending you a circumstantial detail of foreign as well as domestic news. I imagined, indeed, as you were absent when this transaction happened, that you had heard only in general that Licinianus was banished upon account of his lewdness. For fame usually makes her report in general terms, without relating particular circumstances. I think I deserve in return a full
account

account of all that happens in your town and its neighbourhoud ; for sometimes, no doubt, occurrences arise there worth relating ; however, write any thing, provided you send me a letter as long as mine. But I give you notice, I will abate nothing in this demand, and I shall not only number the sides, but even the very lines and syllables. Farewell.

Epist. XII. PLINY TO ARRIANUS.

YOU love Egnatius Marcellinus, and often mention him to me with approbation ; but he will rise still higher in your affection, when I inform you of the honourable part he has lately acted. When he went quæstor into one of the provinces, the person to whose lot it fell to attend him as secretary, happening to die before his salary became due, Marcellinus had too much honour to think he had a right of applying the sum which the public had appointed for that purpose, to his own use. At his return therefore he applied to Cæsar, who referred the consideration of what should be done with this money, to the senate. It was a question indeed of no great importance ; however, a question it was. The heirs of the secretary claimed it for themselves, and the commissioners of the treasury for the public. The cause was tried, and counsel were heard, who spoke extremely well on both sides. Cæcilius Strabo was of opinion that the public had a right to this sum. Bæbius Macer gave it for the heirs : but it was determined agreeably to the sentiments of the former. You will, I am persuaded, take the first opportunity, as I did myself, of expressing your approbation to Marcellinus of this action ; for though indeed it is abundantly sufficient that he has received the applause of the emperor and the senate, yet the
addition

addition of yours will be a very considerable satisfaction to him. Those who are actuated by a sense of fame, are fond of praise, even though it comes from their inferiors; but Marcellinus has so high an esteem of you, as to be particularly desirous to approve himself to your judgment. To which let me add, it will heighten his pleasure when he finds, that the fame of this action has travelled so far as to have reached you. For I know not how it is, mankind are generally more pleased with an extensive than even a great reputation. Farewell.

Epist. XIII. PLINY to CORNELIUS TACITUS.

I Am very glad that you are safely arrived in town; for though I am always desirous to see you, I am more particularly so now. I purpose to continue a few days longer at my house at Tusculum, in order to finish a work which I have upon my hands. For I am afraid, should I put a stop to this design now that it is so nearly completed, I shall find it difficult to resume it. In the mean while, that I may lose no time, I send this letter before me to request a favour of you, which I hope shortly to ask in person. But before I inform you what my request is, I must let you into the occasion of it. Being lately at Comum, the place of my nativity, a young lad, son to one of my neighbours, made me a visit. I asked him whether he studied oratory, and where? he told me he did, and at Mediolanum. And why not here? Because (said his father, who came with him) we have no professors. "No!" said I, "surely it concerns you who are fathers (and very opportunely several of the company were so) that your sons should receive their education here, rather than any where else. For where can they be placed more agreeably than in
" their

“ their own country, or instructed with more
 “ safety and less expense than at home and under
 “ the eye of their parents? Upon what very easy
 “ terms might you, by a general contribution,
 “ procure proper masters, if you would only ap-
 “ ply towards the raising a salary for them, the
 “ extraordinary expense it costs you for your sons
 “ journeys, lodgings, and whatever else you pay
 “ for up on account of their being abroad; as pay
 “ indeed you must in such a case for every thing.
 “ Though I have no children myself, yet I shall
 “ willingly contribute to a design so beneficial
 “ to (what I look upon as a child, or a parent)
 “ my country; and therefore I will advance a
 “ third part of any sum you shall think proper to
 “ raise for this purpose. I would take upon my-
 “ self the whole expense, were I not apprehen-
 “ sive that my benefaction might hereafter be
 “ abused and perverted to private ends; as I have
 “ observed to be the case in several places where
 “ public foundations of this nature have been e-
 “ stablished. The single means to prevent this
 “ mischief is, to leave the choice of the professors
 “ entirely in the breast of the parents, who will
 “ be so much the more careful to determine pro-
 “ perly, as they shall be obliged to share the ex-
 “ pense of maintaining them. For though they
 “ may be careless in disposing of another’s bounty,
 “ they will certainly be cautious how they ap-
 “ ply their own; and will see that none but those
 “ who deserve it shall receive my money, when
 “ they must at the same time receive theirs too.
 “ Let my example then encourage you to unite
 “ heartily in this useful design; and be assured
 “ the greater the sum my share shall amount to,
 “ the more agreeable it will be to me. You can
 “ undertake nothing that will be more advanta-
 “ geous to your children, nor more acceptable to
 “ your country. They will by this means re-
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“ceive their education where they receive their
 “birth, and be accustomed from their infancy to
 “inhabit and affect their native soil. May you
 “be able to procure professors of such distin-
 “guished abilities, that the neighbouring towns
 “shall be glad to draw their learning from hence;
 “and as you now send your children to foreigners
 “for education, may foreigners in their turn flock
 “hither for their instruction.”

I thought proper thus to lay open to you the
 rise of this affair, that you might be the more
 sensible how agreeable it will be to me, if you un-
 dertake the office I request. I intreat you there-
 fore, with all the earnestness a matter of so much
 importance deserves, to look out, amongst the
 great numbers of men of letters which the repu-
 tation of your genius brings to you, proper per-
 sons to whom we may apply for this purpose;
 but without entering into any agreement with
 them on my part. For I would leave it entirely
 free to the parents to judge and chuse as they shall
 see proper: all the share I pretend to claim is,
 that of contributing my care and my money. If
 therefore any one shall be found who thinks him-
 self qualified for the undertaking, he may repair
 thither; but without relying upon any thing but
 his merit. Farewell.

Epist. XIV. PLINY to PATERNUS.

YOU desire and expect, perhaps, according
 to custom, some grave oration; but I am
 going to put into your hands, as a most delicate
 curiosity, some of my poetical amusements. You
 will receive then with this letter a collection of
 my verses, which I wrote to while away an idle
 hour upon the road, in the bath, or at table.
 They were composed upon different occasions, as
 I found myself in a gay, an amorous, a melan-
 choly,

choly, or satirical humour; and accordingly the style is sometimes elevated, and sometimes simple. I endeavoured by this variety to hit different tastes; as some things may be found in them, perhaps, of general relish. If you should meet with any passages which may seem too free, your reading will supply you with my apology, in the example of those great and venerable names who have gone before me in the same kind of writing, who without scruple have employed not only the warmest descriptions, but the plainest terms. This, however, is a liberty I have not allowed myself; not as pretending to more severity (for why should I?) but because, in truth, I have less courage. Nevertheless, I entirely approve of the rule which Catullus lays down for this kind of compositions:

*Let the poet's conduct be
Free from wanton levity:
Not so his muse—her sportive lay
Pleases most, when most she's gay.*

You must look upon it as an instance of the great value I set upon your judgment, that I venture to submit the whole to your examination, rather than select out of them some of the more finished pieces for your approbation. Indeed in this kind of miscellaneous collections, what would pass off well enough if they were viewed separately, lose all their advantage, by appearing in better company. But a sensible and discerning reader ought not to compare pieces of distinct sorts with one another, but examine each performance apart, and if it is perfect in its kind, not condemn it because it falls short of the beauties of some others of a different nature. But I will say nothing more of them; for to attempt to excuse or recommend this idle business by a long preface,

face, would be adding one folly to another. I will only therefore premise farther, that I design to give these trifles the title of Hendecasyllables, in allusion to the measure in which the verses are composed. Call them, if you think proper, epigrams, eclogues, or (as many others have) little poems; in a word, give them what name you please, I offer them only as Hendecasyllables. All I beg of your sincerity is, that you would speak your opinion of them to me, with the same freedom that you would to others. When I ask this, I think I lay you under no difficulty. If, indeed, these little poetical essays were my only or chief productions, it might sound, perhaps, a little harsh to advise me to mind something else; but you may with great delicacy and politeness tell me, I have something else to mind. Farewell.

Epist. XV. PLINY to FUNDANUS.

IF I am governed by judgment in any thing, it is undoubtedly in the singular affection which I have for Asinius Rufus. He is a most extraordinary man, and a friend to all good men, in which number why may I not venture to include myself? He and Tacitus (to whose eminent virtues you are no stranger) are united in the strictest intimacy. If therefore you esteem us, you cannot but have the same favourable sentiments of Rufus; for a similitude of manners is, you know, the strongest cement of friendship. He has several children: and in this, as in every thing else, he acts the part of a friend to his country, by supplying it with a numerous race of citizens, which he sees with pleasure extend to a second generation; and this in an age when even one child is thought a burthen, as it prevents that lucrative adulation which is usually paid to those

who have none. But he scorns such low views, and thinks himself happy in the title of grandfather; for which he is indebted to Saterius Firmus; a person whom you would esteem as much as I do, if you knew him as well. My design in all this detail, is, to let you see, what a numerous family you may oblige by conferring a single favour: a favour which I apply to you for, because I sincerely wish and assuredly presage you will soon be in a condition to grant it. I hope, and believe you will be consul the approaching year: and in this persuasion I am confirmed both by your own conspicuous merit, and the distinguishing judgment of the emperor. Asinius Bassus, the eldest son of Rufus, solicits the quæstorship at the same time. I know not whether I ought to say (which however the father would have me both say and think, though Bassus is too modest to allow of it) that he is a greater man than his father. Were I to represent his abilities, his probity, his learning, his genius, his application, and his parts, as great as you will most certainly experience them; you, who never yet suspected my veracity, would scarce conceive he deserved the character. I wish our age so abounded in merit, as to supply you with some who might justly stand in competition with him. In that case I should be the first to advise you, to consider well where to fix your choice: but the misfortune is — however I will not speak of my friend in an invidious strain. I will only say he is a young man, who deserves you should look upon him in the same relation as our ancestors used to consider their quæstors, that is, as your son. Men of your character for wisdom should chuse their political children of the same cast they would wish nature to form their real ones. Will it not be an honour to your consulship to have a quæstor whose father has been prætor, and whose relations consuls, yet
who,

who, though but a youth, reflects back to his family (and that by their own confession) as much glory as he derives from it? Let me entreat you then to comply with my request and my advice. In which, if I seem premature, I hope you will pardon me, when you consider, that in a place where every thing is seized by the man who can first lay hold of it, it is staying much too late to wait till precisely the proper time: besides that there is a pleasure in anticipating one's wishes. Allow Bassus then to reverence you already as consul, and do you in return esteem him as your quæstor; and may I, who love you both, enjoy that double pleasure. The truth is, as you have each so equal a claim to my affection, that I shall be obliged to promote with all my assiduity and credit both your interests in this affair, though they should happen to be distinct; so it will be extremely agreeable if I may be able to serve these two ends at one and the same time in my good offices to this young man; and in a word, to be supported in this solicitation by your assistance, to whose judgment and suffrage the senate pays so great a regard. Farewell.

Epist. XVI. PLINY TO VALERIUS PAULINUS.

Rejoice upon my account, rejoice upon your own account, and rejoice on the account of the public; for eloquence is still held in honour. Being lately engaged to plead in a cause before the centumviri, the croud was so great that I could not get to my place, but in passing by the tribunal where the judges sat. And I have this pleasing circumstance to add farther, that a young nobleman having lost his robe in the press, stood in his vest to hear me for seven hours together: for so long I was speaking; and with a success equal to my great fatigue. Come on then, my

friend, and let us earnestly pursue our studies, nor screen our own indolence under pretence of that of the public. Never, we may rest assured, will there be wanting hearers and readers, so long as we can supply them with orators and authors worthy of their attention. Farewell.

Epist. XVII. PLINY to GALLUS.

YOU inform me that Cæcilius, the consul elect, has commenced a suit against Corellia, and earnestly beg me to undertake her cause in her absence. As I have reason to thank you for your information, so I have to complain of your entreaties: without the first, indeed I should have been ignorant of this affair, but the last was unnecessary, as I want no solicitations to comply, where it would be ungenerous in me to refuse; for can I hesitate a moment to take upon myself the protection of a daughter of Corellius? It is true, indeed, though there is no particular intimacy between her adversary and me, we are, however, upon good terms. It is true likewise, that he is a person of great rank, and who has a claim to particular regard from me, as he is entering upon an office, which I have had the honour to fill; and it is natural for a man to be desirous those dignities should be treated with the highest respect, which he himself once possessed. Yet these considerations have little weight, when I reflect that it is the daughter of Corellius whom I am to defend. The memory of that excellent person, than whom this age has not produced a man of greater dignity, rectitude, and good sense, is indelibly impressed upon my mind. I admired him before I was acquainted with him; and contrary to what is usually the case, my esteem increased in proportion as I knew him better: and indeed I knew him thoroughly, for he treated me
without

without reserve, and admitted me to share in his joys and his sorrows, in his gay and his serious hours. When I was but a youth, he esteemed, and (I will even venture to say) revered me as if I had been his equal. When I solicited any post of honour, he supported me with his interest, and recommended me by his testimony; when I entered upon it, he was my introducer and my attendant; when I exercised it, he was my guide and my counsellor. In a word, where-ever my interest was concerned, he exerted himself with as much alacrity as if he had been in all his health and vigour. In private, in public, and at court, how often has he advanced and supported my reputation! It happened once, that the conversation before the emperor Nerva turned upon the hopeful young men of that time, and several of the company were pleased to mention me with applause: he sat for a little while silent, which gave what he said the greater weight; and then with that air of dignity, to which you are no stranger, *I must be reserved*, said he, *in my praises of Pliny, because he does nothing without my advice*. By which single sentence he gave me a greater character than I would presume even to wish for, as he represented my conduct to be always such as wisdom must approve, since it was wholly under the direction of one of the wisest of men. Even in his last moments he said to his daughter, (as she often mentions), *I have in the course of a long life raised up many friends to you; but there is none that you may more assuredly depend upon, than Pliny and Cornutus*. A circumstance I cannot reflect upon, without being deeply sensible how much it is incumbent upon me, to endeavour to act up to the opinion so excellent a judge of mankind conceived of me. I shall therefore most readily give my assistance to Corellia in this affair; and willingly hazard any displeasure I may

incur by appearing in her cause. Though I should imagine, if in the course of my pleadings I should find an opportunity to explain and enforce, more at large than I can do in a letter, the reasons I have here mentioned, upon which I rest at once my apology and my glory; her adversary (whose suit may perhaps, as you say, be entirely unprecedented, as it is against a woman) will not only excuse, but approve my conduct. Farewell.

Epist. XVIII. PLINY TO ANTONINUS.

WHat stronger proof can I give you how much I admire your Greek epigrams, than by having endeavoured to imitate some of them in a Latin translation? I confess however, partly from the weakness, or, as Lucretius calls it, the poverty of our native language, much to their disadvantage; yet if clothed in a Roman dress, and by my unskilful hand, you should still be able to discover some remaining beauty in them; what must their charms be, do you imagine, when adorned with all the majesty of the Greek language, and formed by your superior genius? Farewell.

Epist. XIX. PLINY TO HISPULLA.

AS you are a striking example of all virtue, and as you loved your excellent and most affectionate brother with a mutual tenderness, and have not only shewn the kindness of an aunt, but supplied the loss of a tender parent to his daughter*; you will hear, I am well persuaded, with infinite pleasure, that she behaves worthy of her father, her grandfather, and yourself. She possesses an excellent understanding, together

* Calphurnia, Pliny's wife.

with

with a consummate prudence, and gives the strongest testimony of the purity of her heart by her fondness of me. Her affection to me has given her a turn to books; and my compositions, which she takes a pleasure in reading, and even getting by heart, are continually in her hands. How full of tender solicitude is she when I am entering upon any cause? How kindly does she rejoice with me when it is over? While I am pleading, she places persons to inform her from time to time how I am heard, what applauses I receive, and what success attends the cause. When at any time I recite my works, she conceals herself behind some curtain, and with secret rapture enjoys my praises. She sings my verses to her lyre, with no other master but love, the best instructor, for her guide. From these happy circumstances I draw my most assured hopes, that the harmony between us will increase with our days, and be as lasting as our lives. For it is not my youth or my person, which time gradually impairs; it is my reputation and my glory of which she is enamoured. But what less could be expected from one who was trained by your hands, and formed by your instructions; who was early familiarised under your roof with all that is worthy and amiable, and was first taught to conceive an affection for me, by the advantageous colours in which you were pleased to represent me. And as you revered my mother with all the respect due even to a parent, so you kindly directed and encouraged my infancy, presaging of me from that early period all that my wife now fondly imagines I really am. Accept therefore of our mutual thanks, that you have thus, as it were designedly, formed us for each other. Farewell.

Epist.

Epist. XX. PLINY to MAXIMUS.

I Have already communicated to you my opinion of each particular part of your work, as I perused it; I must now tell you my general thoughts of the whole. It is a strong and beautiful performance; the sentiments are sublime and masculine, and conceived in all the variety of a pregnant imagination; the diction is chaste and elegant; the figures are happily chosen, and a copious and diffusive vein of eloquence runs through the whole, and raises a very high idea of the author. You seem borne away by the full tide of a strong imagination and deep sorrow, which mutually assist and heighten each other; for your genius gives sublimity and majesty to your passion; and your passion adds strength and poignancy to your genius. Farewell.

Epist. XXI. PLINY to VELIUS CEREALIS.

A H the sad and cruel catastrophe of the Helvidiæ! These two sisters are both dead in childbirth, after having each of them been delivered of a girl. This misfortune pierces me with the deepest sorrow; as indeed, to see two such amiable young ladies fall a sacrifice to their fruitfulness in the prime and flower of their years, is a misfortune which I cannot too greatly lament. I lament for the unhappy condition of the poor infants, who are thus become orphans from their birth: I lament for the sake of the disconsolate husbands of these ladies; and I lament too for my own. The affection I bear to the memory of their late father, is inviolable, as my * defence of him in the senate, and all my writings will witness for me. Of three children which survi-

* See b. 9. let. 13.

ved him there now remains but one; and his family that had lately so many noble supports, rests only upon a single person! It will, however, be a great mitigation of my affliction, if fortune shall kindly spare that one, and render him worthy of his father, and * grandfather: and I am so much the more anxious for his welfare and good conduct, as he is the only branch of the family remaining. You know the softness and solicitude of my heart where I have any tender attachments: you must not wonder then, that I have many fears, where I have great hopes. Farewell.

Epist. XXII. PLINY to RUFUS.

ILately assisted our excellent emperor as one of his assessors, in a cause wherein he himself presided. A certain person left by his will, a fund for the establishment of the gymnastic games at Vienna. These my worthy friend Trebonius Rufinus, when he exercised the office of duumvir, had ordered to be totally abolished; and it was now alleged against him, that he had no authority for so doing. He spoke in his own cause with a success equal to his great eloquence; and what particularly recommended his speech

* The famous Helvidius Priscus, who signalized himself in the senate by the freedom of his speeches in favour of liberty, during the reigns of Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian; in whose time he was put to death by the order of the senate, though contrary to the inclination of the emperor, who countermanded the execution: but it was too late, the executioner having performed his office before the messenger arrived. Tacitus represents him as acting in all the various duties of social life with one consistent tenor of uniform virtue; superior to all temptations of wealth, of inflexible integrity, and unbroken courage. Hist. l. 4. 5.

was,

was, that he delivered it with a certain seasonable boldness becoming a true Roman and a good citizen, who stood up in his own defence. When the sentiments of the assessors were taken, Junius Mauricus (who in resolution and integrity has no superior) declared it was his opinion, that the liberty of solemnizing these games should not be restored to the people of Vienna; *and would to God*, added he, *they could be abolished at Rome too!* This, you will say, was an instance of great * firmness: but it is nothing uncommon in Mauricus. He gave as strong a proof of his honest freedom, before the late emperor Nerva. Being at supper one evening with that prince and a few select friends, Vespento † was placed next to the emperor: after I have named the man, I need say no more to raise your indignation. The discourse happened to turn upon Catullus Messalinus, who had a soul as dark as his body; for he was not only cursed with want of sight, but want of humanity. As he was influenced either by fear, shame, or compassion, he proved a very proper instrument in the hand of Domitian to execute his black purposes against every man of worth. The company gave their sentiments of the sanguinary counsels and infamous practices of this creature. “And what,” said the emperor, “would have been his fate had he lived *“now?”* *To have supped with us*, replied Mauricus. But to return from this long digression, into which, however, I did not fall undesignedly:—It was determined these games should be suppressed, which had greatly infected the man-

* Trajan was fond of this kind of entertainments, and had himself exhibited some very splendid ones, upon his triumph over the Dacians.

† An infamous sycophant frequently mentioned by Juvenal.

ners

ners of the people of Vienna ; as they have universally had the same effect among us. But the vices of the Viennenses are confined within their own walls ; ours have a more extensive influence : for it is in the body politic, as in the natural, those disorders are most dangerous that flow from the head. Farewell.

Epist. XXIII. PLINY TO POMPONIUS BASSUS.

I Have taken great pleasure to hear from our common friends, that you support the dignity of ease in your agreeable retirement, as becomes a man of your distinguished wisdom ; that you mix exercise with contemplation, and learned conferences with much reading ; in a word, that you are daily increasing that glorious fund of knowledge you already possess. This is to grow old in a way worthy of one who has discharged the highest offices both civil and military, and who gave himself wholly up to the service of the commonwealth, whilst it became him to do so. Our youth and manhood we owe to our country, but our declining age is due to ourselves ; as the laws themselves seem to suggest, which resign us up to retirement, when we are arrived beyond our sixtieth year *. How do I long for the time when I shall enjoy that happy privilege ! when my years will justify my following the example of your honourable retreat ! when my retirement shall not be deemed indolence, but repose ! Farewell.

* A senator was not obliged to attend the business of the house, after that age. Seneca de Civ. vit. c. 20.

Epist. XXIV. PLINY TO VALENS.

WHen I lately pleaded before the centumviri, in their four courts of justice, it occurred to me, that when I was a youth I was also concerned in one which passed through the same courts. I could not forbear, as usual, to pursue the reflection my mind had started, and to consider if there were any of those advocates then present, who were joined with me in the former cause, but I found I was the only person remaining who had been counsel in both: such changes does the instability of human nature, or the vicissitudes of fortune produce! Death had removed some; banishment others; age and infirmities had silenced those, while these were withdrawn to enjoy the happiness of retirement; one was at the head of an army; and the indulgence of the prince had exempted another from the burthen of civil employments. What turns of fortune have I experienced even in my own person! It was eloquence that first raised me; it was eloquence that occasioned my disgrace; and it was eloquence that advanced me again. The friendships of the wise and good at my first appearance in the world, were highly serviceable to me; the same friendships proved afterward extremely prejudicial to my interest, and now again they are my ornament and support. If you compute the time in which these incidents have happened, it is but a few years; if you number the events, it seems an age. A lesson that will teach us to check both our despair and presumption, when we observe such a variety of revolutions roll round in so swift and narrow a circle. It is my custom to communicate to my friend all my thoughts, and to set before him the same rules and examples, by which I regulate my own conduct:

duct: and such was my design in this letter. Farewell.

Epist. XXV. PLINY to MAXIMUS.

I Formerly wrote you, that it was to be feared inconveniencies would arise from the method of voting by ballots. It hath so happened. At the last election of magistrates, upon some of the tablets were written several pieces of pleasantry, and even indecencies; in one particularly, instead of the name of the candidate, was inserted the names of those who espoused his interest. The senate was extremely exasperated at this insolence; and with one voice threatened the vengeance of the emperor upon the author. But he lay concealed, and possibly might be in the number of those who expressed the greatest indignation. What must one think of such a man's private conduct, who in public, upon so important an affair, and at so solemn a time, could indulge himself in such scurrilous liberties, and dare to act the droll in the face of the senate? *Who will know it*, is the argument that prompts little and base minds to commit these indecencies. Secure from being discovered by others, and unawed by any self-respect, they take their pen and tablets; and hence arise these buffooneries, which are fit only for the stage. What course shall we take, what remedy apply against this abuse? our disorders indeed in general, have every where eluded all attempts to restrain them. But this is a point much too high for us, and will be the care of that superior power, who, by these low but daring insults, has daily fresh occasions of exerting all his pains and vigilance. Farewell.

Epist. XXVI. PLINY to NEPOS.

YOU desire I should cause such of my treatises as you have most carefully collected, be read over and corrected. I shall most certainly comply with your request; as indeed there is nothing I ought to do with more readiness, especially at your instance. When a man of such dignity, learning, and eloquence, deeply engaged in business, and entering upon the important government of a province, has so good an opinion of my compositions as to think them worth taking with him, how am I obliged to endeavour that this part of his baggage may not seem an useless embarrassment? My first care therefore shall be, that they may attend you with all the advantages possible; and my next, to supply you at your return with others, which you may not think undeserving to be added to them; for I can have no stronger encouragement to enter upon some new design, than being assured of finding a reader of your taste and discernment. Farewell.

Epist. XXVII. PLINY to FALCO.

THIS is the third day that I have attended Sentius Augurinus in reciting his poems, which I heard not only with great pleasure, but even admiration. They are conceived with much delicacy and elegance, and abound with numberless strokes of tenderness and sublimity, of wit and satire. I am of opinion, there has not any thing for these many years appeared more finished of the kind; if indeed my great affection for him and the praises he bestows upon me, do not bias my judgment. He introduces his poems with observing, that I sometimes amuse

muse myself with writing verses. If I can recollect the second line of this introduction, (for the rest I remember, and have often repeated), you shall judge if my sentiments of them are just :

*Sweetly flow my tender lays,
Like Calvus' or Catullus' strains,
(Bards approv'd of ancient days !)
Where love in all its softness reigns.*

*Yet wherefore ancient poets name ?
Let Pliny my example be :
Him the sacred nine inflame ;
More than ancient poets he !*

*To mutual Love he tunes the lay,
While far the noisy bar he flies :
Say then ye grave, ye formal say,
Who shall gentle love despise ?*

You see with what sprightliness of imagination, what propriety of sentiment, what clearness of expression the whole is wrought up ; and in this taste, I will venture to assure you, you will find his performance in general, which I will send you as soon as it shall be published. In the mean while, admit this excellent youth into a share of your affection, and congratulate our age on the production of such a genius, whose virtues render him still more illustrious. He spends his time partly with Spurinna, and partly with Antoninus ; he has the honour to be related to one, and to be the companion of both. You will easily imagine what uncommon virtues he must possess, who is thus the favourite of two such venerable old men : for the poet's observation is most undoubtedly true.

*Those who in close society are join'd,
In manners equal, you will ever find.* Euripid.
Farewell.

Epist. XXVIII. PLINY to SEVERUS.

Herennius Severus, a man of great learning, is greatly desirous to have the pictures of two of your countrymen, Cornelius Nepos, and Titus Cassius, to adorn his library; and has entreated me, if they are to be met with where you are (as probably they may), that I would procure copies of them for him. That care I recommend to you, rather than to any other, not only because I know your friendship for me readily inclines you to comply with my requests; but as being sensible of the high regard you have for learning and all her friends; and that your affection and veneration for those who have been an ornament to your country, is equal to that which you bear towards your country herself. I beg therefore you would employ some skilful hand in this work; for if it is difficult to catch a likeness from the life, it is much more so to preserve it in a copy; from which I desire you would not suffer the painter to deviate, not even for the better. Farewell.

Epist. XXIX. PLINY to ROMANUS.

AWake, my friend! you must, at any rate, take your place upon the bench the next time the court sits. In vain would your indolence repose itself under my protection; for there is no absenting with impunity. Behold that severe prætor, the bold Licinius Nepos, fining even a mighty senator for the same neglect! The senator pleaded his cause in person; but pleaded in suppliant tone. The fine, it is true, was remitted; but sore was his dismay, but humble his intercessions, but sad his necessity of being obliged to ask pardon. All magistrates in that office,
you

you will tell me perhaps, are not thus formidably rigid. In good earnest, however, you may be mistaken: for though indeed, to be the author and reviver of an example of this kind, may be an act of severity; yet when once it is introduced, even lenity herself may follow the precedent. Farewell.

Epist. XXX. PLINY TO LICINIUS SURA.

I Have brought you, out of my own country, instead of a present, a query which well deserves the consideration of your extensive erudition. There is a spring which runs in a neighbouring mountain, and turning among the rocks is received into a little banquetting-room, from whence, after being detained a short time, it falls into the Larian lake. The nature of this spring is extremely surprising; it ebbs and flows regularly three times a-day. This increase and decrease is plainly visible, and very entertaining to observe. You sit down by the side of the fountain, and whilst you are taking a repast and drinking its water, which is extremely cool, you see it gradually rise, and fall. If you place a ring or any thing else at the bottom when it is dry, the stream reaches it by degrees till it is entirely covered, and then again gently retires from it; and this you may see it do for three times successively. Shall we say, that some secret current of air stops and opens the fountain-head, as it advances to, or recedes from it; as we see in bottles, and other vessels of that nature, where there is not a free and open passage, though you turn their necks downwards, yet the outward air obstructing the vent, they discharge their contents as it were by starts? Or may it not be accounted for upon the same principle as the flux and reflux of the sea? Or,

as those rivers which discharge themselves into the sea, meeting with contrary winds and the swell of the ocean, are forced back in their channels; so may there not be something that checks this fountain, for a time, in its progress? Or is there rather a certain reservoir that contains these waters in the bowels of the earth, which while it is recruiting its discharges, the stream flows more slowly and in less quantity, but when it has collected its due measure, it runs again in its usual strength and fulness? Or lastly, is there I know not what kind of subterraneous poize, that throws up the water when the fountain is dry, and repels it when it is full! You, who are so well qualified for the inquiry, will examine the reasons * of this wonderful appearance; it will be

* There are several of these periodical fountains in different parts of the world; as we have some in England. Lay-well near Torbay, is mentioned in the Philosophical Transactions, [N^o 104. p. 909.], to ebb and flow several times every hour. The reasons of this kind of springs are of no very easy solution, and the causes assigned by modern philosophers are scarce more satisfactory than those pointed out by the ancients: perhaps they do not depend upon any general principle, but arise from different causes according to their respective situations. The conjecture which Mr Addison offers in accounting for those he saw in Switzerland, seems plausible enough, and equally applicable to this fountain mentioned by Pliny; as it is probable it took its rise from the same mountains. "We saw," says that inimitable author in his description of Geneva and the lake, "in several parts of the Alps that bordered upon us, vast pits of snow; as several mountains that lie at a greater distance, are wholly covered with it. I fancied the confusion of mountains and hollows I here observed,

be sufficient for me if I have given you a clear description of it. Farewell.

B O O K V.

*Epist. I.* PLINY TO SEVERUS.

A Small legacy which was lately left me, has given me much greater pleasure than I should have received by a far more considerable one from any other person. Pomponia Gratilla, having disinherited her son Affudius Curianus, appointed me, and Sertorius Severus of prætorian rank, together with several eminent Roman knights, her coheirs. The son applied to me to give him my share of the inheritance, in order to make use of my name as a precedent a-

“ served, furnished me with a more probable reason
 “ than any I have met with, for these periodical
 “ fountains in Switzerland, which flow only at particular hours of the day. For as the tops of these
 “ mountains cast their shadows upon one another,
 “ they hinder the sun’s shining on several parts at
 “ such certain times, so that there are several heaps
 “ of snow which have the sun lying upon them for
 “ two or three hours together, and are in the shade
 “ all the day afterward. If therefore it happens,
 “ that any particular fountain takes its rise from any
 “ of these reservoirs of snow, it will naturally begin
 “ to flow on such hours of the day as the snow begins
 “ to melt: but as soon as the sun leaves it again to
 “ freeze and harden, the fountain dries up, and receives no more supplies, till about the same time
 “ the next day, when the heat of the sun again sets
 “ the snows a-running that fall into the same little
 “ conduits, traces, and canals, and by consequence
 “ break out and discover themselves always in the
 “ same place.” Addison’s trav. 353.

gainst

gainst the rest of the heirs ; but offered at the same time to enter into a secret agreement to return my proportion back to me. I told him, it was by no means agreeable to my character to carry the appearance of acting one thing, whilst I was, in truth, acting another ; and that there was something of meanness in making presents to a man of his fortune, who had no children : besides that it would not at all answer the purpose at which he was aiming. Indeed, (I added), if I were to withdraw my claim, it might be of some service to him ; and this I was ready and willing to do, if he could prove to me that he was unjustly disinherited. " Let me prevail with you then," said he, " to be my arbitrator in this case." After a short pause, I told him I consented to his proposal : " for why," said I, " should I not have as good an opinion of my own impartial disinterestedness as you seem to have ? But remember I am not to be prevailed upon to decide the point in question against your mother, if it should appear she had just reason for what she has done. Be it agreeable to your inclination," said he, " which I am sure is always to act according to justice." I called to my assistance Corellius and Frontinus, two of the most considerable lawyers which Rome at that time afforded. Attended with those friends, I heard the cause in my chamber. Curianus said every thing which he thought could favour his pretensions, to whom (as there was no body but myself to defend the character of Gratilla) I made a short reply ; after which I retired with my friends to deliberate upon the case, and then returned and acquainted Curianus, that it was our opinion his conduct had justly drawn upon him his mother's resentment. Some time afterward, Curianus commenced a suit in the centumviral court against all the coheirs except myself. The day appointed for the

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the trial approaching, the rest of the coheirs were desirous of compromising the affair; not out of any diffidence of their cause, but from a distrust of the times. They were apprehensive, what had been the case of many others might happen to them, and that from a civil suit it should end in a capital one; as there were some amongst them to whom the friendship of Gratilla and Rusticus * might be extremely prejudicial: they therefore desired me to go and talk with Curianus. We met in the temple of Concord: "Suppose," said I, "your mother had left you the fourth part of her estate, or even suppose she had made you sole heir, but had exhausted so much of the estate in legacies that there would not be more than a fourth part remaining to you; could you justly have complained? You ought to be contented therefore, if being absolutely disinherited, as you are, the heirs are willing to relinquish to you a fourth part; which however I will increase by contributing my proportion. You know you did not commence any suit against me, so that the prescription which I have gained by two years peaceable possession, secures my share from any claim you can set up against it. But to induce you to come into the proposals on the part of the coheirs, and that you may be no sufferer by the peculiar respect you shewed to me, I offer to contribute my proportion with them."—The silent satisfaction of my own conscience is not the only pleasure this transaction has afforded me; it

* Gratilla was the wife of Rusticus: Rusticus was put to death by Domitian, and Gratilla banished. It was a sufficient crime in the reign of that execrable prince to be even a friend of those who were obnoxious to him.

has contributed greatly to my reputation. It is this same Curianus who has left me the legacy I mentioned in the beginning of my letter, which I received as a very honourable mark of his approbation of my behaviour in this affair, so agreeable (if I do not flatter myself) to the true spirit of ancient integrity. I have given you this account, because in all my joys and sorrows I look upon you as myself, and I thought it would be unkind not to communicate to so tender a friend whatever occasions me pleasure; as I confess this circumstance has: for I do not pretend to such refined strains of philosophy as to be indifferent, when I think I have done honestly, whether my actions meet with that approbation which is in some sort their reward. Farewell.

Epist. II. PLINY to FLACCUS:

THE * thrushes I received from you were so excellent, that my Laurentinum is not capable of supplying me with any thing in this tempestuous season, either of the land or sea kind, to make you a suitable return. I have only therefore to send you the ineffectual acknowledgments of a barren letter: an exchange more unequal, I confess, than that famous one of the subtle Diomed. But your good nature will so much the more readily grant me an excuse, as I own myself not to deserve one. Farewell.

Epist. III. PLINY to ARISTO.

AMongst the many agreeable and obliging instances I have received of your friendship,

* These birds, of which there are several sorts, were in high reputation among the Romans, and generally had a place upon all elegant tables.

your

your not concealing from me the long conversation which lately passed at your house concerning my verses, and the various judgments pronounced upon them, is by no means the least. There were some, it seems, who did not disapprove of my poems, but at the same time censured me in a free and friendly manner, for employing myself in composing and reciting them. I am so far, however, from desiring to extenuate the charge, that I willingly acknowledge myself still more deserving of it; and confess that I sometimes amuse myself with writing verses, and verses too of the gayer kind. I compose comedies; divert myself with pantomimes; read the lyric poets; and enter into the spirit of the most wanton muse; in short, I am nothing averse to pleasantries, mirth, and gaiety; and to sum up every kind of innocent amusement in one word, *I am a man*. I am not at all displeased, that those who are ignorant that the most learned, the wisest, and the best of men have employed themselves in the same way, should be surprised at my doing so: but those who know what noble examples I follow, will allow me, I trust, thus to err; but to err with those whom it is an honour to imitate, not only in their most serious actions, but lightest amusements. Is it unbecoming me (I will not name any living example, lest I should seem to flatter), but is it unbecoming me to practise what became Tully, Calvus, Pollio, Messala, Hortensius, Brutus, Sulla, Catulus, Scævola, Sulpitius, Varro, the Torquati, Memmius, Lentulus, Gætulicus, Seneca, and in our own memory, Verginius Rufus? But if the examples of private men are not sufficient to justify me, I can cite Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Nerva, and Titus. I forbear to add Nero to the catalogue; though I am sensible what is sometimes practised by the worst of men does not therefore degenerate into wrong; on the contrary,

contrary, it still maintains its credit, if frequently countenanced by the best. In that number Virgil, Cornelius Nepos, and prior to these, Ennius, and Accius, justly deserve the most distinguished place. These last indeed were not senators, but virtue knows no distinction of rank or title. I recite my works, it is true, and in this I am not sure I can support myself by their examples. They, perhaps might be satisfied with their own judgment; but I have too humble an opinion of mine, to suppose my compositions sufficiently perfect, because they appear so to me. My reasons then for reciting are, that there is a certain reverence for one's audience, which fires the imagination and excites a more vigorous application; and that I have by this means an opportunity of settling any doubts I may have concerning my performance, by observing the general sentiments of my hearers. In a word, I have the advantage of receiving different hints from different persons: and though they should not declare their sentiments in express terms, yet the air of a countenance, the turn of a head or eye, the motion of a hand, a whisper, or even silence itself, will easily distinguish their real judgment from the language of civility: so that if any one of my audience should have the curiosity to peruse the same performance which he heard me read, he may find several things altered or omitted, and perhaps too upon his judgment, though he did not say a single word to me. But I am defending my conduct in this particular as if I had actually recited my works in public, and not in my own house before my friends; a numerous appearance of whom has upon many occasions been held an honour, but never surely a reproach. Farewell.

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Epist. IV. PLINY to VALERIANUS.

THE fact which I am going to mention, though in itself of no great importance, may be attended with very considerable consequences. Sollers, a person of prætorian rank, petitioned the senate for leave to hold a fair upon his estate. He was opposed in this by the deputies from the Vicentini, who employed Tuscilius Nominatus as their counsel. The cause was adjourned; and at the next meeting the deputies appeared unattended with their counsel, complaining that they had been grossly deceived: an expression, which whether it dropped from them in the warmth of resentment, or that they really thought so, I will not determine. Nepos the prætor asked them who it was they had retained? They replied, the same person who was counsel for them before. Being farther asked, whether he then appeared for them without any gratuity? They informed the house that they had given him six thousand sesterces, and afterwards presented him with a second fee of one thousand denarii. Upon which, Nepos moved that Nominatus should be ordered to attend. And this is all that was done in the affair that day; but unless I am greatly mistaken, the inquiry will not end here; for one may observe in several instances, the slightest sparks have lighted up a train of very remote consequences. And now I have sufficiently raised your curiosity, I imagine, to make you desirous I should inform you of the rest; unless you should chuse to gratify it by coming to Rome, and had rather see than read the sequel. Farewell.

Epist. V. PLINY to MAXIMUS.

I Am deeply afflicted with the news I have received of the death of Fannius, not only as I have lost in him a friend whose eloquence and politeness I admired, but a guide whose judgment I pursued: and indeed he possessed a most penetrating genius, improved and quickened by great experience. There are some circumstances attending his death, which aggravate my concern. He left behind him a will which had been made a considerable time, by which it happens his estate is fallen into the hands of those who had incurred his displeasure, while his greatest favourites had no share of it. But what I particularly regret is, that he has left unfinished a very noble work in which he was engaged. Notwithstanding his full employment at the bar, he had undertaken a history of those persons who had been put to death or banished by Nero; of which he had perfected three books. They are written with great delicacy and exactness; the style is pure, and preserves a proper medium between the plain narrative and the historical: and as they were very favourably received by the public, he was the more desirous of being able to complete the rest. The hand of death is ever, in my estimation, too severe and too sudden when it falls upon such as are employed in some immortal work. The sons of sensuality, who have no views beyond the present honour, terminate with each day the whole purpose of their lives; but those who look forward to posterity, and endeavour to extend their memories to future generations by useful labours;—to such, death is always immature, as it still snatches them from amidst some unfinished design. Fannius, long before his death, had a strong presentiment of what has happened: he dreamed

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dreamed one night, that as he was in his study with his papers before him, Nero came in, and placing himself by his side, took up the three first books of this history; which he read through, and then went away. His dream greatly alarmed him, and he looked upon it as an intimation, that he should not carry on his history any farther than Nero had read: and so the event proved. I cannot reflect upon this accident without lamenting that he should not be able to accomplish a work, which had cost him so much pains and vigilance; as it suggests to me at the same time the thoughts of my own mortality, and the fate of my writings: and I am persuaded the same reflection alarms your apprehensions for those in which you are employed. Let us then, my friend, while yet we live, exert all our endeavours, that death, whenever it arrives, may find as little as possible to destroy. Farewell.

Epist. VI. PLINY to APOLLINARIS.

THE kind concern you expressed when you heard of my design to pass the summer at my * villa in Tuscany, and your obliging endeavours to dissuade me from going to a place which you think unhealthy, is extremely agreeable to me. I confess, indeed, the air of that part of Tuscany which lies towards the coast, is thick and unwholesome: but my house is situated at a great distance from the sea, under one of the Apennine mountains, which, of all others, is most

* This was Pliny's principal seat, lying about one hundred and fifty miles from Rome, where he usually resided in the summer-season. The reader will observe therefore, that he considers it in a very different manner from that of Laurentinum (his winter-villa) both with respect to the situation and the house itself.

esteemed for the clearness of its air. But that you may lay aside all apprehensions on my account, I will give you a description of the temperature of the climate, the situation of the country, and the beauty of my villa, which I am persuaded you will hear with as much pleasure as I shall relate. The winters are severe and cold, so that myrtles, olives, and trees of that kind which delight in constant warmth, will not flourish here; but it produces bay-trees in great perfection; yet sometimes, though indeed not oftener than in the neighbourhood of Rome, they are killed by the sharpness of the seasons. The summers are exceedingly temperate, and continually attended with refreshing breezes, which are seldom interrupted by high winds. If you were to come here and see the numbers of old men who have lived to be grandfathers and great-grandfathers, and hear the stories they can entertain you with of their ancestors, you would fancy yourself born in some former age. The disposition of the country is the most beautiful that can be imagined: figure to yourself an immense amphitheatre; but such as the hand of nature could only form. Before you lies a vast extended plain bounded by a range of mountains, whose summits are crowned with lofty and venerable woods, which supply variety of game: from hence, as the mountains decline, they are adorned with under-woods. Intermixed with these are little hills of so strong and fat a soil, that it would be difficult to find a single stone upon them; their fertility is nothing inferior to the lowest grounds; and though their harvest, indeed, is something later, their crops are as well matured. At the foot of these hills the eye is presented, where-ever it turns, with one unbroken view of numberless vineyards, which are terminated by a border, as it were, of shrubs. From thence you have a prospect

spect of the adjoining fields and meadows below. The soil of the former is so extremely stiff, and upon the first ploughing it rises in such vast clods, that it is necessary to go over it nine several times with the largest oxen and the strongest ploughs, before they can be thoroughly broken; whilst the enamelled meadows produce trefoil, and other kinds of herbage as fine and tender as if it were but just sprung up, being continually refreshed by never-failing rills. But though the country abounds with great plenty of water, there are no marshes; for as it is a rising ground, whatever water it receives without absorbing, runs off into the Tiber. This river, which winds through the middle of the meadows, is navigable only in the winter and spring, when it transports the produce of the lands to Rome: but its channel is so extremely low in summer, that it scarce deserves the name of a river: towards the autumn however, it begins again to renew its claim to that title. You could not be more agreeably entertained, than by taking a view of the face of this country from the top of one of our neighbouring mountains: you would imagine that not a real, but some painted landscape lay before you, drawn with the most exquisite beauty and exactness; such an harmonious and regular variety charms the eye which way soever it throws itself. My villa is so advantageously situated, that it commands a full view of all the country round; yet you go up to it by so insensible a rise, that you find yourself upon an elevation without perceiving you ascended. Behind, but at a great distance, stand the Apennine mountains. In the calmest days we are refreshed by the winds that blow from thence, but so spent, as it were, by the long tract of land they travel over, that they are entirely divested of all their strength and violence before they reach us. The exposition of the prin-

cipal front of the house is full south, and seems
 to invite the afternoon sun in summer (but some-
 thing earlier in winter) into a spacious and well-
 proportioned portico, consisting of several mem-
 bers, particularly a porch built after the manner
 of the ancients. In the front of the portico is a
 sort of terrace, embellished with various figures,
 and bounded with a box-hedge, from whence you
 descend by an easy slope, adorned with the re-
 presentation of divers animals in box answering
 alternately to each other, into a lawn overspread
 with the soft, I had almost said the liquid acan-
 thus: this is surrounded by a walk inclosed with
 tonfile ever-greens, shaped into a variety of forms.
 Beyond it is the *gēstatio* laid out in the form of a
 circus, ornamented in the middle with box cut
 in numberless different figures, together with a
 plantation of shrubs prevented by the sheers from
 running up too high: The whole is fenced in
 with a wall covered by box, rising by different
 ranges to the top. On the outside of the wall
 lies a meadow that owes as many beauties to na-
 ture, as all I have been describing within does to
 art; at the end of which are several other mea-
 dows and fields interspersed with thickets. At
 the extremity of the portico stands a grand dining-
 room, which opens upon one end of the terrace;
 as from the windows there is a very extensive
 prospect over the meadows up into the country,
 from whence you also have a view of the terrace
 and such parts of the house which project for-
 ward, together with the woods inclosing the ad-
 jacent hippodrome. Opposite almost to the cen-
 tre of the portico stands an apartment something
 backwards, which encompasses a small area, sha-
 ded by four plane-trees, in the midst of which a
 fountain rises, from whence the water running
 over the edges of a marble basin gently refreshes
 the surrounding plane-trees and the verdure un-
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derneath them. This apartment consists of a bedchamber free from every kind of noise, and which the light itself cannot penetrate; together with a common dining-room that I use whenever I have none but familiar friends with me. A second portico looks upon this little area, and has the same prospect with the former I just now described. There is, besides, another room, which being situated close to the nearest plane-tree, enjoys a constant shade and verdure: its sides are incrust'd half-way with carved marble, and from thence to the ceiling a foliage is painted with birds intermixed among the branches, which has an effect altogether as agreeable as that of the carving; at the basis of which is placed a little fountain, that playing through several small pipes into a vase, produces a most pleasing murmur. From a corner of the portico you enter into a very spacious chamber opposite to the grand dining-room, which from some of its windows has a view of the terrace, and from others of the meadow, as those in the front look upon a cascade, which entertains at once both the eye and the ear; for the water falling from a great height, foams round the marble basin which receives it below. This room is extremely warm in winter, being much expos'd to the sun, as in a cloudy day the heat of an adjoining stove very well supplies his absence. From hence you pass through a spacious and pleasant undressing room into the cold bath room, in which is a large gloomy bath: but if you are dispos'd to swim more at large, or in warmer water, in the middle of the area is a wide basin for that purpose, and near it a reservoir from whence you may be supplied with cold water to brace yourself again, if you should perceive you are too much relaxed by the warm. Contiguous to the cold bath is one of a middling degree of heat, which enjoys the kindly warmth of

of the sun, but not so intensely as that of the hot bath, which projects farther. This last consists of three several divisions, each of different degrees of heat; the two former lie open to the full sun, the latter, though not so much exposed to his heat, receives an equal share of its light. Over the undressing room is built the tennis-court, which, by means of different circles, admits of different kinds of games. Not far from the baths, is the stair-case which leads to the inclosed portico, after having first passed through three apartments: one of these looks upon the little area with the four plane-trees round it, the other has a sight of the meadows, and from the third you have a view of several vineyards, so that they have as many different prospects as expositions. At one end of the inclosed portico, and indeed taken off from it, is a chamber that looks upon the hippodrome, the vineyards, and the mountains; adjoining is a room which has a full exposure to the sun, especially in winter: from hence runs an apartment that connects the hippodrome with the house: and such is the form and aspect of the front. On the side is a summer inclosed portico which stands high, and has not only a prospect of the vineyards, but seems almost to touch them. From the middle of this portico you enter a dining-room cooled by the wholesome breezes which come from the Apennine valleys: from the windows in the back front, which are extremely large, there is a prospect of the vineyards, as you have also another view of them from the folding-doors through the summer-portico: along that side of this dining-room where there are no windows, runs a private stair-case for the greater conveniency of serving at entertainments: at the farther end of a chamber from whence the eye is entertained with a view of the vineyards, and (what is equally agreeable) of the portico.

portico. Underneath this room is an inclosed portico something resembling a grotto, which enjoying, in the midst of summer-heats, its own natural coolness, neither admits nor wants the refreshment of external breezes. After you have passed both these porticoes, at the end of the dining room stands a third, which, as the day is more or less advanced, serves either for winter or summer use. It leads to two different apartments, one containing four chambers, the other three, which enjoy by turns both sun and shade. In the front of these agreeable buildings lies a very spacious hippodrome, entirely open in the middle, by which means the eye, upon your first entrance, takes in its whole extent at one view. It is encompassed on every side with plane-trees covered with ivy, so that while their heads flourish with their own green, their bodies enjoy a borrowed verdure; and thus the ivy twining round the trunk and branches, spreads from tree to tree, and connects them together. Between each plane-tree are planted box-trees, and behind these, bay-trees, which blend their shade with that of the planes. This plantation, forming a straight boundary on both sides of the hippodrome, bends at the farther end into a semicircle, which being set round and sheltered with cypress-trees, varies the prospect, and casts a deep and more gloomy shade; while the inward circular walks (for there are several) enjoying an open exposure, are perfumed with roses, and correct, by a very pleasing contrast, the coolness of the shade with the warmth of the sun. Having passed through these several winding alleys, you enter a straight walk, which breaks out into a variety of others, divided off by box-hedges. In one place you have a little meadow; in another the box is cut into a thousand different forms; sometimes into letters, expressing the name of the master; sometimes that
of

of the artificer: whilst here and there little obelisks rise intermixed alternately with fruit-trees: when on a sudden, in the midst of this elegant regularity, you are surpris'd with an imitation of the negligent beauties of rural nature; in the centre of which lies a spot surrounded with a knot of dwarf plane-trees. Beyond these is a walk interspersed with the smooth and twining acanthus, where the trees are also cut into a variety of names and shapes. At the upper end is an alcove of white marble, shaded with vines, supported by four small Carystian pillars. From this bench the water gushing through several little pipes, as if it were pressed out by the weight of the persons who repose themselves upon it, falls into a stone cistern underneath, from whence it is received into a fine polished marble basin, so artfully contrived, that it is always full without ever overflowing. When I sup here, this basin serves for a table, the larger sort of dishes being placed round the margin, while the smaller ones swim about in the form of little vessels and water-fowl. Corresponding to this, is a fountain which is incessantly emptying and filling; for the water which it throws up a great height, falling back again into it, is by means of two openings returned as fast as it is received. Fronting the alcove (and which reflects as great an ornament to it as it borrows from it) stands a summer-house of exquisite marble, whose doors project and open into a green inclosure; as from its upper and lower windows the eye is presented with a variety of different verdures. Next to this is a little private closet (which though it seems distinct, may be laid into the same room) furnished with a couch; and notwithstanding it has windows on every side, yet it enjoys a very agreeable gloominess, by means of a spreading vine which climbs to the top, and entirely overshades it. Here you may

may lie and fancy yourself in a wood, with this difference only, that you are not exposed to the weather: in this place a fountain also rises and instantly disappears: in different quarters are disposed several marble seats, which serve no less than the summer-house, as so many reliefs after one is wearied with walking. Near each seat is a little fountain; and throughout the whole hippodrome several small rills run murmuring along, wheresoever the hand of art thought proper to conduct them, watering here and there different spots of vedure, and in their progress refreshing the whole.

And now, I should not have hazarded the imputation of being too minute in this detail, if I had not proposed to lead you into every corner of my house and gardens. You will hardly, I imagine, think it a trouble to read the description of a place, which I am persuaded would please you, were you to see it; especially as you have it in your power to stop, and by throwing aside my letter, sit down as it were, and rest yourself as often as you think proper. I had at the same time a view to the gratification of my own passion: as I confess, I have a very great one for this villa, which was chiefly built or finished by myself. In a word, (for why should I conceal from my friend my sentiments, whether right or wrong?), I look upon it as the first duty of every writer frequently to throw his eyes upon his title-page, and to consider well the subject he has proposed to himself; and he may be assured, if he closely pursues his plan, he cannot justly be thought tedious; but on the contrary, if he suffers himself to be carried off from it, he will most certainly incur that censure. Homer, you know, has employed many verses in the description of the arms of Achilles, as Virgil also has in those of Æneas; yet neither of them are prolix, because

cause they both keep within the limits of their original design. Aratus, you see, is not esteemed too circumstantial, though he traces and enumerates the minutest stars; for he does not go out of his way for that purpose, he only follows where his subjects lead him. In the same manner (to compare small things with great), if endeavouring to give you an idea of my house, I have not wandered into any thing foreign, or, as it were, devious, it is not my letter which describes, but my villa which is described, that is to be deemed large. But not to dwell any longer upon this digression, lest I should myself be condemned by the maxim I have just laid down; I have now informed you why I prefer my Tuscan villa, to those which I possess at Tusculum, Tibur, and Præneste. Besides the advantages already mentioned, I here enjoy a more profound retirement, as I am at a farther distance from the business of the town, and the interruption of troublesome avocations. All is calm and composed; which contributes, no less than its clear air and unclouded sky, to that health of body and cheerfulness of mind which I particularly enjoy here: both of which I keep in proper exercise by study and hunting. And indeed there is no place which agrees better with all my family in general; I am sure at least, I have not yet lost one (and I speak it with the sentiments I ought) of all those I brought with me hither: and may the gods continue that happiness to me, and that honour to my villa! Farewell.

Epist. VII. PLINY to CALVISIUS.

IT is certain the law does not allow a corporate city to inherit any estate by will, or to receive a legacy. Saturninus however, who has appointed me his heir, had left a fourth part of
his

his estate to our corporation of Comum ; which devise he afterwards changed into an absolute legacy of 400,000 sesterces. This bequest, in a legal view, is undoubtedly void ; but considered as the clear and express will of the dead, ought to stand firm and valid : a consideration in my opinion (though I am afraid the lawyers will not be pleased with what I say) of higher regard than any law whatsoever, especially when the interest of one's country is concerned. It would be extremely inconsistent in me, who made them a present of eleven hundred thousand sesterces out of my own patrimony, to withhold from them a benefaction of a little more than a third part of that sum out of an estate which is entirely adventitious. You, who, like a true patriot, have the same affection for this our common country, will join with me, I dare say, in these sentiments. I wish therefore you would, at the next assembly of the decurii, acquaint them, in a respectful manner, how the law stands in this case, and at the same time let them know that I shall not take advantage of it, but will pay them the 400,000 sesterces according to the directions in the will of Saturninus. You will represent it as his present and his liberality ; I only claim the merit of complying with his request. I forbear writing to their senate concerning this affair, fully relying upon your friendship and prudence, and being assured that you are both able and willing to act for me upon this occasion as I would for myself ; besides, I am afraid I should not seem to have preserved that just medium in my letter, which you will much easier be able to do in a speech. The countenance, the gesture, and even the tone of voice governs and determines the sense of the speaker : whereas a letter being destitute of these advantages, is more liable to the

malignant interpretation of those who are inclined to pervert its meaning. Farewell.

Epist. VIII. PLINY to CAPITO.

YOU are not singular in the advice you give me to undertake the writing of history; it is a work which has been frequently pressed upon me by several others of my friends; and what I have some thoughts of engaging in. Not that I have any confidence of succeeding in this way; that would be too rashly presuming upon the event of an experiment which I have never yet made; but because it is a noble employment to rescue from oblivion those who deserve to be eternally remembered, and extend the reputation of others, at the same time that we advance our own. Nothing, I confess, so strongly affects me as the desire of a lasting name: a passion highly worthy of the human breast, especially of one, who not being conscious to himself of any ill, is not afraid of being known to posterity. It is the continual subject therefore of my thoughts,

By what fair deed I too may raise a name:

for to that I moderate my wishes; the rest,

And gather round the world immortal fame,

is much beyond my hopes:

Though yet—However the first is sufficient, and history perhaps is the single means that can assure it to me. Oratory and poetry, unless carried to the highest point of eloquence, are talents but of small recommendation to those who possess them; but history however executed is always entertaining. Mankind are naturally inquisitive; and are so fond of having this turn gratified, that they will listen with attention to the plainest matter of fact, and the most idle tale.

But

But besides this, I have an example in my own family that inclines me to engage in this study, my uncle and adoptive father having acquired great reputation as a very accurate historian; and the philosophers, you know, recommend it to us to tread in the steps of our ancestors, when they have gone before us in the right path. If you ask me then, why do I not immediately enter upon the task? My reason is this: I have pleaded some very important causes, and (though I am not extremely sanguine in my hopes concerning them) I have determined to revise my speeches, lest, for want of this remaining labour, all the pains they cost me should be thrown away, and they with their author be buried in oblivion: for with respect to posterity, the work that was never finished, was never begun. You will think, perhaps, I might correct my pleadings and write history at the same time. I wish indeed I were capable of doing so, but they are both such great undertakings, that either of them is abundantly sufficient. I was but nineteen when I first appeared at the bar; and yet it is only now at last I understand (and that in truth but imperfectly) what is essential to a complete orator. How then shall I be able to support the weight of an additional burthen? It is true, indeed, history and oratory have in many points a general resemblance; yet in those very things in which they seem to agree, there are several circumstances wherein they differ. Narration is common to them both; but it is a narration of a distinct kind. The former contents itself frequently with low and vulgar facts; the latter requires every thing splendid, elevated, and extraordinary: strength and nerves is sufficient in that, but beauty and ornament is essential to this: the excellency of the one consists in a strong, severe, and close style; of the other, in a diffusive, flowing,

ing, and harmonious narration: in short, the words, the emphasis, and whole turn and structure of the periods are extremely different in these two arts. For, as Thucydides observes, there is a wide distance between compositions which are calculated for a present purpose, and those which are designed to remain as lasting monuments to posterity; by the first of which expressions he alludes to oratory, and by the other to history. For these reasons I am not inclined to blend together two performances of such distinct natures, which, as they are both of the highest rank, necessarily therefore require a separate attention; lest, confounded by a croud of different ideas, I should introduce into the one what is only proper to the other. Therefore (to speak in our language of the bar) I must *beg leave the cause may be adjourned some time longer*. In the mean while, I refer it to your consideration from what period I shall commence my history. Shall I take it up from those remote times which have been treated of already by others? In this way, indeed, the materials will be ready prepared to my hands, but the collating of the several historians will be extremely troublesome: or, shall I write only of the present times, and those wherein no other author has gone before me? If so, I may probably give offence to many, and please but few. For, in an age so over-run with vice, you will find infinitely more to condemn than approve; yet your praise, though ever so lavish, will be thought too reserved; and your censure, though ever so cautious, too profuse. However, this does not at all discourage me; for I want not sufficient resolution to bear testimony to truth. I expect then, that you prepare the way which you have pointed out to me, and determine what subject I shall fix upon for my history, that when I am ready to enter upon the task you have assigned

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assigned me, I may not be delayed by any new difficulty. Farewell.

Epist. IX. PLINY to SATURNINUS.

YOur letter made very different impressions upon me, as it brought me news which I both rejoiced and grieved to receive. It gave me pleasure when it informed me you were detained in Rome; which though you will tell me is a circumstance that affords you none, yet I cannot but rejoice at it, since you assure me you continue there upon my account, and defer the recital of your work till my return; for which I am greatly obliged to you. But I was much concerned at that part of your letter which mentioned the dangerous illness of Julius Valens; though indeed, with respect to himself, it ought to affect me with other sentiments, as it cannot but be for his advantage the sooner he is relieved by death, from a distemper of which there is no hope he can ever be cured. But what you add concerning Avitus, who died in his return from the province where he had been quæstor, is an accident that justly demands our sorrow. That he died on board a ship, at a distance from his brother whom he tenderly loved, and from his mother and sisters, are circumstances, which though they cannot affect him now, yet undoubtedly did in his last moments, as well as tend to heighten the affliction of those he has left behind. How severe is the reflection, that a youth of his well-formed disposition should be extinct in the prime of life, and snatched from those high honours to which his virtues, had they been permitted to grow to their full maturity, would certainly have raised him! How did his bosom glow with the love of the fine arts! How many books has he perused! How many volumes has he transcribed! but the

fruits of his labours are now perished with him, and for ever lost to posterity. — Yet why indulge my sorrow? a passion which, if we once give a loose to it, will aggravate every the slightest circumstance. I will put an end therefore to my letter, that I may to the tears which yours has drawn from me. Farewell.

Epist. X. PLINY to ANTONINUS.

I AM never more sensible of the superior excellency of your verses, than when I endeavour to imitate them. As the hand of the painter must always fail, when perfect beauty sits for the picture; so I labour to catch the graces of my original, but still fall short of them. Let me conjure you then to continue to supply us with many more such excellent models, which every man must wish to imitate, but few, perhaps none, will be able to equal. Farewell.

Epist. XI. PLINY to TRANQUILLUS.

IT is time you should acquit the promise my verses gave to our common friends, of your works. The world is every day impatiently inquiring after them, and there is some danger of your being summoned in form to give an account of your delay. I am myself a good deal backward in publishing, but you are even still slower. You must hasten your hand, however, otherwise the severity of my satire may perhaps extort from you, what the blandishments of my softer muse could not obtain. Your work is already arrived to that degree of perfection, that the file can only weaken, not polish it. Allow me then the pleasure of seeing your name in the title-page of a book, and suffer the works of my dear Tranquillus to be recited and transcribed, to be bought

bought and read. It is but fair, and agreeable to our mutual friendship, that you should give me in return the same pleasure you receive from me. Farewell.

Epist. XII. PLINY TO FABATUS.

YOUR letter informs me that you have erected a noble public portico, as a memorial of yourself and your son, and that the next day after the ceremony of opening it, you engaged to repair and beautify the gates of our city at your own charge : thus it is that you rise from one act of munificence to another ! I take part, believe me, in every thing that concerns your glory ; which, from the alliance that is between us, in some degree redounds to mine ; and am pleased to see the memory of my father-in-law delivered down to posterity by such beautiful structures. I rejoice too, at the honour that hereby arises to our native province ; and as every thing that tends to her advantage is highly agreeable to me, by what hand soever it may be conferred ; so particularly when it is by yours. I have only to desire that heaven would continue to cherish in you this generous frame of mind, and to grant you many years in which to exert it : for your bounty, I am well persuaded, will not terminate here, but extend itself to farther acts of beneficence. Generosity, when once she is set forward, knows not how to stop her progress ; as the more familiar we are with the lovely form, the more enamoured we grow of her engaging charms. Farewell.

Epist. XIII. PLINY TO SCAURUS.

HAVING thoughts of publishing a little speech which I have composed, I invited some of
my

my friends whose judgments I revere, to attend the recital of it; though at the same time, that I might be more secure of hearing the truth of their sentiments, I selected only a small number: for I have a double view in these rehearsals; the first is, that the zealous solicitude of approving myself to my audience may inflame my imagination; the next, that those errors which a partiality to myself may conceal from my own observation, be pointed out to me. I succeeded in my design, and my friends obliged me with their sincere opinions; as I likewise observed myself some passages which required correction. I send you the piece therefore as I have now altered it. The occasion of it will appear from the title, and for the rest I refer you to the speech itself, which I hope you will peruse so carefully, as not to stand in need of a preface to explain it. I beg you would sincerely tell me your sentiments of the whole, and of its several parts. I shall be more inclined to suppress or publish it, as your judgment shall decide either way. Farewell.

Epist. XIV. PLINY to VALERIANUS.

YOU desire me to inform you (agreeably * to my promise) what success attended Nepos in his accusation of Tuscilius Nominatus. The latter being brought before the senate, pleaded his own cause, though indeed no body appeared to support the accusation. On the contrary, the deputies from the Vicentini were so far from pursuing their charge, that they favoured his defence. The sum of what he urged in his own behalf was; “ That it was his courage and not his integrity had failed him; that he set out with a design of pleading the cause, and actually came into the senate for that purpose, but being dis-

* See letter the 4th of this book.

“ couraged

“courage by his friends, he withdrew himself;
“that they dissuaded him from persisting to op-
“pose (especially in the senate) the inclinations
“of a senator, who did not contend so much
“for the fair itself, as for his own credit and cha-
“racter, which he looked upon as concerned in
“this cause; that if he did not desist, he would
“suffer greater indignities than in his former
“pleading.” (And there were some, though in-
deed but a few, who expressed high indignation
at his speech.) He proceeded to implore the
clemency of the senate with tears in his eyes; and
prudently endeavoured throughout his whole
speech (as he is a man extremely well versed in
the arts of oratory) to appear rather to sue for
pardon than justice. Afranius Dexter, the con-
sul elect, was for acquitting him. The purport
of his sentiments was to this effect: “That
“Nominatus would have acted more prudently
“if he had gone through the cause of the Vicen-
“tini with the same resolution he began it: how-
“ever, since it did not appear he had been guil-
“ty of this neglect with any fraudulent design,
“and that he had not been convicted of any thing
“which merited public animadversion, it was his
“opinion he ought to be acquitted; but that he
“should return to the Vicentini whatever gra-
“tuity he had received from them.” This mo-
tion was approved by the whole senate except
Flavius Aper: his opinion was, that he should be
suspended from exercising the profession of an ad-
vocate for five years; and though he could not
bring any over to his sentiments, he resolutely
persisted in them: he even obliged Dexter, who
spoke first on the opposite side, to take his oath
that he thought his motion was for the benefit
of the republic; agreeably to a law which he pro-
duced concerning the assembling of the senate.
But this, though it was certainly legal, was op-
posed

posed by some, who thought it a reflection upon Dexter, as if he had been unduly influenced in his sentiments. But before the votes of the house were collected, Nigrinus, a tribune of the people, read a very elegant and sensible remonstrance, wherein he strongly complained, that the profession of the law was become venal, and that the advocates took money, even to betray the cause of their clients; that they made a shameful trade of their function: and instead of honour, which was formerly their only reward, they now lived upon the spoils of their fellow-citizens, from whom they received large and annual salaries. He gave the senate a summary account of the laws which had been made upon this subject, and reminded them likewise of their own decrees to the same purpose: and he concluded with observing, that since both the authority of the laws and of the senate had been contemned, it was highly necessary to address the emperor, that he would be pleased himself to interpose, and provide some remedy to so great an evil. Accordingly, a few days after, an edict was published, drawn up with a proper mixture of mildness and severity; for which I refer you to the journals of the public. I cannot but congratulate myself upon this occasion, that in all the causes in which I have been concerned, I never made any bargain, or received any fee, reward, or even present whatsoever. One ought, no doubt, to avoid whatever is mean and unworthy, not so much because it is illegal, as because it is dishonourable. But still there is great satisfaction in finding the legislature levelling its prohibitions against a practice, which one never suffered one's self to fall into. The glory indeed of my conduct may, or rather most certainly will, be considerably eclipsed, when this practice shall universally prevail by necessity, which I always pursued

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sued by choice. In the mean time, however, I enjoy the pleasure of my friends jests, while some tell me I certainly foresaw this edict; and others, that it was particularly levelled against my avarice and rapine Farwell.

Epist. XV. PLINY to PONTIUS.

I Was at Comum when I heard that Cornutus Tertullus was appointed surveyor * of the Æmilian way. This news was inexpressibly agreeable to me, both upon his account and my own: upon his, because though ambition should be (as it certainly is) far removed from his heart, yet it cannot but be acceptable to him to receive so great an honour without seeking it; upon mine, because it heightens the satisfaction which results from my own office, to see a man of so distinguished a character as Cornutus raised to one of the same † nature; for to be placed in the

* This was an office of great dignity among the Romans, and usually conferred upon those who had been consuls. Thus Cæsar is mentioned by Plutarch as surveyor of the Appian way. These roads extended to a great distance from the city on all sides, the most noble of which was the Appian computed to reach three hundred and fifty miles. Mr Wright in his travels, speaking of this road, observes, that "though it be much broken in several places, and travelling over it very bad, in others it is wonderfully well preserved, notwithstanding it be computed near two thousand years old. They are paved with such hard stones, that they are rather polished than worn, and so well joined, that in some places the whole breadth of the way seems one entire piece."

† It appears by some ancient inscriptions still remaining, that Pliny was surveyor of the river Tiber and its banks, to which office it is probable he here alludes.

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same rank with the good, is a pleasure equal to being honoured with the highest dignities. And where indeed is the man who exceeds Cornutus in worth and virtue? or whose conduct is a more express model of ancient manners? In this I do not found my judgment upon fame, which however, with great justice, speaks of him in the highest terms; but upon long and frequent experience. We have ever been joined in the same friendships with the most shining characters in both sexes which this age has produced: an union that cemented us in the strictest intimacy. To these private ties were added those of a more public nature: he was, you know, my colleague in the treasury, as well as the consulship. These were opportunities of gaining a thorough knowledge of his uncommon virtues; when I followed him as a guide, and revered him as a parent; and that not so much upon account of his age, as his merit. I rejoice therefore no less for my own sake than his; and I do so upon a public as well as private consideration, since virtue is now no longer, as formerly, exposed to the most cruel dangers, but advanced to the noblest dignities. But if I were to indulge the joyous sentiments I feel upon this occasion, I should never have finished my letter. Let me turn then to an account of what I was doing when your messenger arrived. He found me with my wife's grandfather and aunt, together with several other friends, whose company I had not enjoyed for a considerable time: I was traversing my grounds, hearing the complaints of the farmers, running over their tedious accounts, and had before me papers and letters far different from those to which my inclination early devoted me: in a word, I was preparing to return to Rome. For I have obtained but a short leave of absence; and indeed the news of this office being conferred on Cornutus, reminds

reminds me to haſten to the duties of my own. I hope your favourite Campania will reſign you about the ſame time, ſo that when I return to Rome, not a day may be loſt to our friendly intercourſe. Farewell.

Epiſt. XVI. PLINY to MARCELLINUS.

I Write this to you under the utmoſt oppreſſion of ſorrow : the youngſt daughter of my friend Fundanus is dead ! Never ſurely was there a more agreeable and amiable young perſon, or one who better deſerved to have enjoyed a long, I had almoſt ſaid, an immortal life ! ſhe was ſcarce fourteen, and yet had all the wiſdom of age, and diſcretion of a matron, joined with youthful ſweetneſs and virgin modeſty. With what an engaging fondneſs did ſhe behave to her father ! how kindly and reſpectfully receive his friends ! how affectionately treat all thoſe who, in their reſpective offices, had the care and education of her ! She employed much of her time in reading, in which ſhe diſcovered great ſtrength of judgment ; ſhe indulged herſelf in few diverſions, and thoſe with much caution. With what forbearance, with what patience, with what courage did ſhe endure her laſt illneſs ! She complied with all the directions of her phyſicians ; ſhe encouraged her ſiſter, and her father ; and when all her ſtrength of body was exhausted, ſupported herſelf by the ſingle vigour of her mind. That, indeed, continued even to her laſt moments, unbroken by the pain of a long illneſs, or the terrors of approaching death ; and it is a reflection which makes the loſs of her ſo much the more to be lamented. A loſs infinitely ſevere ! and more ſevere by the particular conjuncture in which it happened ! She was contracted to a moſt worthy youth ; the wedding day was fixed, and we were

all invited. How sad a change from the highest joy, to the deepest sorrow! how shall I express the wound that pierced my heart, when I heard Fundanus himself (as grief is ever finding out circumstances to aggravate its affliction) ordering the money he had designed to lay out upon cloaths and jewels for her marriage, to be employed in myrrh and spices for her funeral? He is a man of great learning and good sense, who has applied himself, from his earliest youth, to the nobler and most elevated studies; but all the maxims of fortitude which he has received from books, or advanced himself, he now absolutely rejects, and every other virtue of his heart gives place to all a parent's tenderness. You will excuse, you will even approve his sorrow, when you consider what he has lost. He has lost a daughter who resembled him in his manners, as well as his person, and exactly copied out all her father. If you shall think proper to write to him upon the subject of so reasonable a grief, let me remind you not to use the rougher arguments of consolation, and such as seem to carry a sort of reproof with them, but those of kind and sympathising humanity. Time will render him more open to the dictates of reason: for as a fresh wound shrinks back from the hand of the surgeon, but by degrees submits to, and even requires the means of its cure; so a mind under the first impressions of a misfortune shuns and rejects all arguments of consolation, but at length, if applied with tenderness, calmly and willingly acquiesces in them. Farewell.

Epist. XVII. PLINY to SPURINNA.

KNowing, as I do, how much you admire the polite arts, and what satisfaction you take in seeing young men of quality pursue the
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steps of their ancestors, I seize this earliest opportunity of informing you, that I went to-day to hear Calpurnius Piso read a poem he has composed upon a very bright and learned subject, entitled *the Constellations*. His numbers, which were elegiac, were soft, flowing, and easy, at the same time that they had all the sublimity suitable to such a noble topic. He varied his style from the lofty to the simple, from the close to the copious, from the grave to the florid, with equal genius and judgment. These beauties were extremely heightened and recommended by a most harmonious voice; which a very becoming modesty rendered still more pleasing. A confusion and concern in the countenance of a speaker throws a grace upon all he utters; for there is a certain decent timidity which, I know not how, is infinitely more engaging than the assured and self-sufficient air of confidence. I might mention several other circumstances to his advantage, which I am the more inclined to take notice of, as they are most striking in a person of his age, and most uncommon in a youth of his quality: but not to enter into a farther detail of his merit, I will only tell you, that when he had finished his poem, I embraced him with the utmost complacency; and being persuaded that nothing is a greater encouragement than applause, I exhorted him to persevere in the paths he had entered, and to shine out to posterity with the same glorious lustre, which reflected from his ancestors to himself. I congratulated his excellent mother, and his brother, who gained as much honour by the generous affection he discovered upon this occasion as Calpurnius did by his eloquence; so remarkable a concern he showed for him when he began to recite his poem, and so much pleasure in his success. May the gods grant me frequent occasions of giving you accounts of this nature!

for I have a partiality to the age in which I live, and should rejoice to find it not barren of merit. To this end, I ardently wish our young men of quality would not derive all their glory from the images of their ancestors. As for those which are placed in the house of these excellent youths, I now figure them to myself as silently applauding and encouraging their pursuits, and (what is a sufficient degree of honour to them both) as owning and confessing them to be their kindred. Farewell.

Epist. XVIII. PLINY to MACER.

ALL is well with me, since it is so with you. You are happy, I find, in the company of your wife and son; and are enjoying the pleasures of the sea, the freshness of the fountains, the verdure of the fields, and the elegancies of a most agreeable villa: for so I judge it to be, since he who was most happy ere fortune had raised him to what is generally esteemed the highest point of human felicity, chose it for the place of his retirement. As for myself, I am employed at my Tuscan villa in hunting and studying, sometimes alternately, and sometimes both together; but I am not yet able to determine in which pursuit it is most difficult to succeed. Farewell.

Epist. XIX. PLINY to PAULINUS.

AS I know the humanity with which you treat your own servants, I do not scruple to confess to you the indulgence I shew to mine. I have ever in my mind Homer's character of Ulysses,

Who rul'd his people with a father's love:

And the very expression in our language for the head of a family, suggests the rule of one's conduct towards

towards it. But were I naturally of a rough and hardened cast of temper, the ill state of health of my freedman Zosimus (who has the stronger claim to a humane treatment at my hands, as he now stands much in need of it) would be sufficient to soften me. He is a person of great worth, diligent in his services, and well skilled in literature; but his chief talent, and indeed his profession, is that of a comedian, wherein he highly excells. He speaks with great emphasis, judgment, propriety, and gracefulness: he has a very good hand too upon the lyre, which he understands better than is necessary for one of his profession. To this I must add, he reads history, oratory, and poetry, as well as if he had singly applied himself to that art. I am the more particular in enumerating his qualifications, to let you see how many agreeable services I receive from him. He is indeed endeared to me by the ties of a long affection, which seems to be heightened by the danger he is now in. For nature has so formed our hearts, that nothing contributes more to raise and enflame our inclination for any enjoyment, than the apprehension of being deprived of it: a sentiment which Zosimus has given me occasion to experience more than once. Some years ago he strained himself so much by too vehement an exertion of his voice, that he spit blood, upon which account I sent him into Egypt; from whence, after a long absence, he lately returned with great benefit to his health. But having again exerted himself for several days together beyond his strength, he was reminded of his former malady by a slight return of his cough, and a spitting of blood. For this reason I intend to send him to your farm at Forum-Julii, having frequently heard you mention it as an exceeding fine air, and recommend the milk of that place as very good in disorders of this nature. I beg you

would give directions to your people to receive him into your house, and to supply him with what he shall have occasion for : which will not be much, for he is so temperate as not only to abstain from delicacies, but even to deny himself the necessaries his ill state of health requires. I shall furnish him towards his journey with what will be sufficient for one of his abstemious turn, who is coming under your roof. Farewell.

Epist. XX. PLINY to URSUS.

SOON after the Bithynians had gone through with their prosecution of Julius Bassus, they also impeached their late governor Rufus Varenus ; who was but just before (and that too at their own request) appointed counsel for them against Bassus. Being introduced into the senate, they petitioned, that an inquiry might be made into his conduct. Varenus, on the other hand, begged all proceedings might be stayed till he could send for the witnesses necessary to his defence ; but this being opposed by the Bithynians, that point was debated. I was counsel (and no unsuccessful one) for Varenus ; but whether a good one or not, you will judge when you read my speech. Fortune has a very considerable share in the event of every cause: the quickness, the voice, the manner of the advocate, even the circumstance of time itself ; in a word, the general disposition of the senate, as it is either favourable or adverse to the accused, all conspire to influence the success. But when a speech is read in the closet, it is stripped of all these external circumstances, and has nothing to fear or hope from favour or prejudice, from lucky or unlucky accidents. Fonteius Magius, one of the Bithynians, replied to me with great pomp of words, and little to the purpose : a character applicable to ma-

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ny of the Greek orators, as well as to himself. They mistake volubility for copiousness, and thus overwhelm you with an endless torrent of cold and unaffecting periods. Julius Candidus used, not improperly, to say, that *eloquence is one thing, and loquacity another*. Eloquence indeed is the privilege of very few; nay, if we will believe Marcus Antonius, of none: but that faculty which Candidus calls loquacity, is common to numbers, and the talent which generally attends impudence. The next day Homulus spoke for Varenus with great art, strength, and elegance; to whom Nigrinus made a very close, solid, and graceful reply. It was the opinion of Acilius Rufus, the consul elect, that the Bithynians should be permitted to lodge their information; but he took no notice of the petition of Varenus; which was only another way of putting his negative upon it. Cornelius Priscus, formerly consul, declared that he thought the request of both parties should be granted: and his opinion prevailed. Thus we gained our point; and though we had not the authority either of law or usage on our side, yet certainly the thing we insisted upon was extremely equitable. But I will not in this place give you my reasons for thinking so, that you may with more impatience turn to my speech. For if it is true, as Homer sings, that

— *Novel lays attract our ravish'd ears;
But old, the mind with inattention bears:*

I must not suffer the intemperate loquacity of my letter to despoil my speech of its principal flower, by robbing it of that novelty which is indeed its chief recommendation. Farewell.

Epist.

Epist. XXI. PLINY to RUFUS.

I Went into the Julian court to attend a cause in which at the next sitting I was to reply. The judges had taken their seats, the decemviri were arrived, the eyes of the audience were fixed upon the counsel, and all was hushed in silence and expectation, when an order arrived from the prætor, that the court should be adjourned: an accident extremely agreeable to me, who am never so well prepared, but that I am glad of gaining farther time. The occasion of the court's rising thus abruptly, was an edict of Nepos, the prætor for criminal causes, wherein he directed all persons concerned as plaintiffs or defendants in any cause before him, to take notice, that he designed strictly to put in force the decree of the senate annexed to his edict. Which decree was expressed in the following words: ALL PERSONS WHATSOEVER, WHO HAVE ANY LAW-SUITS DEPENDING, ARE HEREBY REQUIRED AND COMMANDED, BEFORE ANY PROCEEDINGS BE HAD THEREON, TO TAKE AN OATH THAT THEY HAVE NOT GIVEN, PROMISED, OR ENGAGED TO GIVE ANY FEE OR REWARD TO ANY ADVOCATE UPON ACCOUNT OF HIS UNDERTAKING THEIR CAUSE. In these terms, and many others equally full and express, the lawyers were prohibited to make their profession venal. However, after the cause is decided, they are permitted to accept a gratuity of ten thousand sesterces. The prætor for civil causes being alarmed at this unexpected order of Nepos, gave us this holyday in order to take time to consider whether he should follow the example. In the mean while the town is much divided in its sentiments of this edict, some extremely approving, and others as much condemning it.

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We have got then at last (say the latter with a sneer) a redressor of abuses. But pray was there never a prætor before this man? what then is he who thus forwardly sets up for a reformer? Others, on the contrary, say, that he has taken a very proper step upon entering into his office; that he has paid obedience to the laws; considered the decrees of the senate, repressed a most indecent traffic, and will not suffer the most honourable of all professions to be debased into a sordid commerce of lucre. These are the reflections which are universally thrown out upon this occasion; but which side shall be thought to judge most rightly, the event alone will determine. It is the usual method of the world, (though a very unequitable rule of estimation, to pronounce an action to be either right or wrong, as it is attended with good or ill success; in consequence of which you shall hear the very same conduct attributed to zeal or folly, to liberty or licentiousness. Farewell.

B O O K VI.



Epist. I. PLINY TO TYRO.

I Was less sensible of your absence, while you were in the country of the Piceni, and I on the other side the Po, than I find myself now that I am returned to Rome. Whether it be that the scene where we used to associate, naturally excites a more passionate remembrance of you; or that the less distant we are from a friend, the more impatient we grow under the separation, (our desires for a favourite object rising in proportion to our nearer approach towards it), I know not. But upon whatever principle this difference is to be accounted for, remove the uneasiness

siness of it, I entreat you, by hastening hither : otherwise I shall return again into the country (which I now regret having left so soon), were it only to make the experiment whether, when you shall not find me at Rome, you will send the same friendly complaints after me. Farewell.

Epist. II. PLINY TO ARRIANUS.

I Will not say I regret the loss of Regulus, but I confess, I sometimes miss him at the bar. The man, it must be owned, highly honoured eloquence, and was laboriously solicitous in his endeavours to attain it. Though he could never indeed leave off the ridiculous custom of anointing his right or left eye, and wearing a white patch over one side or the other of his forehead, as he was to plead either for the plaintiff or defendant ; though he always, with a most foolish superstition, consulted the soothsayers upon the event of every cause in which he was concerned ; still, all the absurdity proceeded from that high veneration he paid to eloquence. And it was of singular advantage to be concerned in the same cause with him, as he always obtained full indulgence in point of time, and never failed to procure an audience ; for what could be more convenient than, under the protection of a liberty which you did not ask yourself, and before an audience which you had not the trouble of collecting, to harangue at your ease, and as long as you thought proper ? Nevertheless Regulus did well to depart this life, though indeed he would have done much better had he made his exit sooner ; since he might now have lived without any danger to the public, in the reign of a prince under whom he would have had no opportunity of compassing his pernicious purposes. I need not scruple therefore, I think, to say I sometimes

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miss him : for, since his death, the custom has prevailed of not allowing, nor indeed of asking more than an hour or two to plead in, and sometimes not above half that time. The truth is, our advocates take more pleasure in finishing a cause, than in defending it ; and our judges had rather rise from the bench than sit upon it : such is their indolence, and such their disregard to the honour of eloquence and the interest of justice ! But are we wiser than our ancestors ? are we more equitable than the laws, which grant so many hours, and days, and adjournments to a cause ? were our forefathers slow of apprehension, and dull beyond measure ? and are we more clear in our eloquence, more quick in our conceptions, or more scrupulous in our decisions, because we hurry over our causes in fewer hours than they took days to consider of them ? What a reproach is it, Regulus, that none could refuse to thy vain-glorious solicitations, what few will yield even to the duty of their office ! As for myself, whenever I sit upon the bench, (which is much oftener than I appear at the bar), I always give the advocates as much time as they require : for I look upon it as highly presuming, to pretend to guess before a cause is heard, what time it will require, and to set limits to an affair before one is acquainted with its extent ; especially as the first and most sacred duty of a judge is patience, which indeed is itself a very considerable part of justice. But this, it is objected, would give an opening to much impertinent superfluity : I grant it may ; yet is it not better to hear too much, than not to hear enough ? Besides, how shall you know that what an advocate has farther to offer will be superfluous, till you have heard him ? But this, and many other public abuses, will be best reserved to a conversation when we meet ; for I know your affection to the commonwealth inclines you to wish, that
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some means might be found out to check at least those grievances, which would now be very difficult absolutely to remove. — But to turn to affairs of private concern: I hope all goes well in your family; mine remains in its usual situation. The good which I enjoy grows more acceptable to me by its continuance; as habit renders me less sensible of the evils I suffer. Farewell.

Epist. III. PLINY TO VERUS.

I Return you thanks, that you have undertaken to improve that little farm I gave to my nurse. It was worth, when I made her a present of it, an hundred thousand sesterces, but the crops having since failed, it has sunk in its value: however, it will thrive again, I doubt not, under your good management. But what I recommend to your attention, is not so much the land itself, (which yet I by no means except), as the interest of my particular benefaction; for it is not more her concern than mine, to render it as advantageous as possible. Farewell.

*Epist. IV. PLINY TO CALPHURNIA *.*

Business was never more disagreeable to me, than when it prevented me not only from attending, but following you into † Campania. As at all times, so particularly now, I wish to be with you, that I may be a witness what progress

* His wife.

† Where Fabatus, Calphurnia's grandfather, had a villa. This delightful country is celebrated by almost every classic author, and every modern traveller, for the fertility of its soil, the beauty of its landscape, and temperature of its air. *Nihil mollius cælo*, says Florus, *nihil uberius solo; denique bis floribus vernat.* L. i. 15.

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you make in your strength and recovery, and how the tranquillity, the amusements, and plenty of that charming country agree with you. Were you in perfect health, yet I could ill support your absence; for even a moment's uncertainty of the welfare of those we tenderly love, is a situation of mind infinitely painful: but now your sickness conspires with your absence to perplex me with a thousand disquietudes. I fear every thing that can befall you, and, as is usual with all under the same terrifying apprehension, suspect most, what I most dread. Let me conjure you then to prevent my solicitude by writing to me every day, and even twice a-day: I shall be more easy, at least while I am reading your letters; though all my apprehensions will again return upon me the moment I have perused them. Farewell.

Epist. V. PLINY to URSUS.

I Informed you before before *, that Varenus obtained leave of the senate to send for his witnesses. This was thought by many extremely equitable, though some others, with much obstinacy, maintained the contrary; particularly Licinius Nepos, who at the following assembly of the senate, when the house was going upon other business, resumed this affair which had been settled, and made a long speech upon the last decree. And he concluded with moving, that the consuls might be desired to put the question, whether it was the sense of the senate, that as in prosecutions upon the law concerning bribery and corruption, so in that relating to extortion, a clause should be added empowering the defendant, as well as the informer, to summon and examine witnesses. This speech was

* Book 5. let. 20.

looked upon by some as extremely ill-timed: they thought it strange that Nepos should let slip the proper occasion of observing upon the decree, when it was under the consideration of the senate; and object to an affair after it was determined, which he might have obviated when it was in debate. Jumentius Celsus, the prætor, very warmly reproved him in a long speech, for pretending to set himself up as reformer of the senate. Nepos answered him; Celsus replied; and neither of them were sparing of reflections on each other. — But I forbear to repeat what I could not hear without regret; and am therefore so much the more displeased with some members of the senate, who ran from Nepos to Celsus, as one or the other was speaking, with the low pleasure of listening to their mutual invectives; sometimes encouraging one, sometimes the other, and sometimes both; immediately afterwards seeming to reconcile them, and then again animating them to the attack, as if they had been at some public combat. And I could not observe without great concern, that they were mutually instructed with what each other intended to allege; for Celsus replied to Nepos, as Nepos did to Celsus, out of a paper which each held in their hands. This was occasioned by the indiscretion of their friends, and thus these two men abused one another as if they had previously agreed to quarrel. Farewell.

Epist. VI. PLINY TO FUNDANUS.

I Was never more desirous to see you in Rome than at present, and I entreat you therefore to come hither: for I want a friend to share with me in the labour and solicitude of an affair, in which I very warmly interest myself. Julius Naso is a candidate for a post of honour: he

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has many competitors, and some of them of great worth; upon which account, as his success will be more glorious, so it will be more difficult. I am much divided between hope and fear; and the anxiety I feel upon this occasion is so great, that I almost forget I have been consul, and fancy I have the whole field of dignities to run over again. This zeal is justly due to Naso, in return for his long affection to me. The friendship which I have for him did not, it is true, descend to him by inheritance, for his father and I were at too great a distance in point of age to admit of any intimacy between us; yet from my earliest youth I was taught to look upon him with the highest veneration. He was not only an admirer of the polite arts himself, but the patron of all who cultivated them; as he was a frequent attender of Quintilian and Nicetes, to whom I was at that time a disciple. He was, in short, a man of great worth and eminence, and one whose memory ought extremely to facilitate the honours of his son. But there are numbers in the senate who never knew his father; and though there are many also who were well acquainted with him, yet they are such whose regards extend not beyond the living. For this reason Nepos, without relying upon the character of his father, which is likely to prove of more honour than service to him, must exert the utmost of his own endeavours to recommend himself: and indeed, he has ever been as cautious in his conduct as if he had governed it with a particular view to this occasion. He has acquired many friendships, and cultivated them with strict fidelity, and particularly singled me out for the object of his esteem and imitation, from the first moment he was capable of forming any judgment of the world. Whenever I plead, he anxiously attends me, and is always of the party

when I recite ; as he is ever the first to inquire after my works. His brother had the same attachment to me. — But he has lost that excellent brother ! and it shall be my part to supply his place. It is with grief I reflect upon the immature death of the one, as I lament that the other should be deprived of the assistance of so valuable a relation, and left only to the zeal of his friends. It is that consideration which induces me to beg you would come hither and unite your suffrage with mine. It will be of singular advantage to the cause in which I am embarked, if you would appear in it, and join your solicitations with mine ; and such, I know, is your credit and influence, that I am persuaded your doing so will render my applications more effectual, even with my own friends themselves. Let me entreat you then to break through all obstacles that may lie in your way. I have a right to claim your assistance in this conjuncture : your friendship to me, and my credit both require it. I have undertaken to support the interest of Naso, and the world knows that I do ; the pursuit and the hazard therefore is become my own. In a word, if he obtains this post, all the honour will be his ; but if he be rejected, the repulse will be mine. Farewell.

Epist. VII. PLINY to CALPHURNIA.

YOU write me, how much you are affected by my absence, and that your only consolation is in conversing with my works, instead of their author, which you frequently place by your side. How agreeable is it to me to know that you thus wish for my company, and support yourself under the want of it by these tender amusements ! In return, I entertain myself with reading over your letters again and again, and

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and am continually taking them up as if I had just received them; but alas! they only serve to make me more strongly regret your absence: for how amiable must her conversation be, whose letters have so many charms? Let me receive them, however, as often as possible, notwithstanding there is still a mixture of pain in the pleasure they afford me. Farewell.

Epist. VIII. PLINY TO PRISCUS.

YOU have long known, and you esteem Attilius Crescens; as indeed who is there of any rank or worth that does not? For myself, I profess to have a friendship for him much superior to the common attachments of the world. The places of our nativity are separated only by a day's journey; and we conceived an affection to each other when we were very young; a season when friendship strikes the deepest root. Ours improved by years; and so far from being weakened, that it was confirmed by our riper judgments, as those who know us best can witness. He takes pleasure in boasting every where of my friendship; as I do to let the world know, that his honour, his ease, and his interest are my peculiar concern. Insomuch that upon his expressing to me some apprehension from the influence of a certain person who was entering upon the tribuneship of the people, I could not forbear answering,

*Long as Achilles breathes this vital air,
To touch thy head no impious hand shall dare *.*

I mention this to shew you that I look upon every injury offered to Attilius, as done to myself. But you will be impatient to hear what all

* Hom. Il. lib. 1. ver. 38.

this tends to. You must know then, Valerius Varus, at his death, owed Attilius a sum of money. Though I am acquainted with Maximus, his heir, yet there is a closer friendship between him and you. I beg therefore, and conjure you by the affection you have for me, to take care that Attilius is not only paid the principal which is due to him, but all the long arrears of interest. He neither covets the property of others, nor neglects the care of his own; and as he is not engaged in any lucrative profession, he has nothing to depend upon but his frugality: for as to the polite arts, in which he greatly excels, he pursues them merely upon the motives of pleasure and fame. In such a situation, the slightest loss presses hard upon a man, and the more so because he has no opportunities of repairing any injury done to his fortune. Assist us then, I entreat you, in this difficulty, and suffer me still to enjoy the pleasure of his sprightly and diverting conversation; for I cannot bear to see the cheerfulness of my friend overclouded, whose mirth and good humour dissipates every gloom of melancholy in myself. In a word, as you are well acquainted with the entertaining gaiety of temper which Attilius possesses, I hope you will not suffer any injury to discompose and sour it. You may judge by the warmth of his affection, how bitter his resentments would prove; for a generous and great mind can ill brook an injury when it is joined with contempt. But though he could pass it over, yet cannot I: on the contrary, I shall look upon it as a wrong and indignity done to myself, and resent it as one offered to my friend; that is, with double warmth. But after all, why this air of threatening? rather let me end in the same style I began, by earnestly conjuring you so to act in this affair, that neither Attilius may have reason to imagine (which I should greatly regret) that

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that I neglect his interest; nor that I may have occasion to charge you of being careless of mine: as undoubtedly I shall not, if you have the same regard for the latter, as I have for the former. Farewell.

Epist. IX. PLINY to TACITUS.

WHen you recommend to my care Julius Natio in the office he is pursuing, what is it but recommending me to myself? However, I forgive you, and I should have done the same had you been at Rome, and I absent. The tender anxiety of friendship is apt to imagine every circumstance to be material. But I advise you to turn your solicitations to others, and be assured I will take a full share with you in all your applications in this affair, and support you with my best and warmest endeavours. Farewell.

Epist. X. PLINY to ALBINUS.

WHen I came to the country-house of my mother-in-law, in the Albian territories, which once belonged to Verginius Rufus, the place renewed in my mind the sorrowful remembrance of that great and excellent man. He was extremely fond of this retirement, and used to call it *the nest of his old age*; where-ever I turned my eyes, I missed my worthy friend. I had an inclination to visit his monument; but I repented of my curiosity; for I found it still unfinished, and this, not from any difficulty of the work itself, for it is very plain, or rather indeed slight; but through the neglect of him to whose care it was intrusted. I could not see without a concern mixed with indignation, the remains of a man, whose fame filled the whole world, lie for ten years after his death without an inscription, or a name.

name. He had however directed, that the divine and immortal action of his life should be recorded upon his tomb in the following lines :

*Here Rufus lies, who Vindex' arms withstood,
Not for himself, but for his country's good.*

But a faithful friend is so rare to be found, and the dead are so soon forgotten, that we shall be obliged to build even our very monuments, and anticipate the office of our heirs. For who is it that has not reason to fear what has happened to Verginius, may be his own case? an indignity which is so much the more remarkable and injurious, as it falls upon one of his distinguished virtues.

Epist. XI. PLINY to MAXIMUS.

O Happy day! having been called by the præfect of the city, to his assistance in a certain cause, I had the pleasure to hear two excellent young men, Fuscus Salinator and Numidius Quadratus, plead on the opposite sides: both of them of extraordinary hopes and great talents, who will one day, I am persuaded, prove an ornament not only to the present age, but to literature itself. They discovered upon this occasion an admirable probity, supported by inflexible courage: their habit was decent, their elocution distinct, their voice manly, their memory strong*, their

* Strength of memory seems to have been a quality highly esteemed among the Romans, Pliny often mentioning it when he draws the characters of his friends, as in the number of their most shining talents. And Quintilian considers it as the measure of genius; *tantum ingenii, say he, quantum memoriæ*. The extraordinary

their genius elevated, and guided by an equal solidity of judgment. I took infinite pleasure in observing them display these noble qualities; particularly as I had the satisfaction to see that while they looked upon me as their guide and model, they appeared in the sentiments of the audience as my imitators and rivals. It was a day (I cannot but repeat it again) which afforded me the most exquisite happiness, and which I shall ever distinguish with the fairest mark. For what in-

extraordinary perfection in which some of the ancients are said to have possessed this useful faculty, is almost incredible. Our author speaks in a former letter, of a Greek philosopher of his acquaintance, who, after having delivered a long harangue extempore, would immediately repeat it again, without losing a single word. Seneca says, he could in his youth repeat two thousand names exactly in the same order they were read to him; and that to try the strength of his memory, the audience who attended the same professor with himself, would each of them give him a verse, which he would instantly repeat, beginning with the last, and so on to the first, to the amount of two hundred. He tells a pleasant story upon this occasion, of a certain poet, who having recited a poem in public, a person who was present claimed it for his own, and in proof of its being so, repeated it word for word; which the real author was not capable of doing. [Sen. contr. l. 1. sub init.]. Numberless instances might be collected from the ancients, to the same purpose; to mention only a few more: it is said of Themistocles, that he made himself master of the Persian language in a year's time; of Mithridates, that he understood as many languages as he commanded nations, that is, no less than twenty-two; of Cyrus, that he retained the names of every single soldier in his army. [Quint. l. 11. 2]. But the finest compliment that ever was paid to a good memory, is what Tully says of Julius Cæsar, in his oration for Ligarius, that *he never forgot any thing but an injury.*

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deed could be either more pleasing to me on the public account, than to observe two such noble youths building their fame and glory upon the polite arts; or more desirable upon my own, than to be marked out as a worthy example to them in their pursuits of virtue? May heaven still grant me the continuance of that pleasure! and you will bear me witness, I sincerely implore the gods, that every man who thinks me deserving of his imitation, may far exceed the model he has chosen. Farewell.

*Epist. XII. PLINY to FABATUS *.*

INdeed you ought not to make the least scruple of recommending to me such persons as you judge worthy your patronage, because nothing is more agreeable to your character than to be as extensively beneficent as possible; nor to mine, than to interest myself in every thing in which you are concerned. Be assured therefore I shall give all the assistance in my power to Vettius Priscus, especially in what relates to my peculiar province; I mean the bar—

You desire me to forget those letters which you wrote to me, you say, in the openness of your heart; but believe me, there is none I remember with more complacency. They are very pleasing proofs of the share I enjoy of your affection, since you use the same free expostulations with me, that you would with your own son. And, to confess the truth, they are so much the more agreeable, as I had nothing to accuse myself of upon your account; for I had very exactly performed your requests. I entreat you again and again, still to rebuke me with the same freedom, whenever you imagine (and I trust it will be only imagination) that I fail in my duty towards you: it will afford

* His wife Calphurnia's grandfather.

me the pleasure of receiving a strong mark of your affection; and you that of being convinced I did not deserve the reproach. Farewell.

Epist. XIII. PLINY to URSUS.

HAve you ever seen a man so harassed and persecuted as my friend Varenus? He has been obliged to enter into a fresh defence, and, as it were, to petition again for what he had, with much struggle and difficulty, already obtained *. The Bithynians have had the confidence not only to complain to the consuls of the decree of the senate; but also to inveigh against it to the emperor, who happened to be absent when it passed. Caesar referred them back to the senate, where they still persisted in their remonstrances. Claudius Capito ventured to be counsel for them, and I will add, with more ill-manners than true fortitude, as it was to arraign the justice of a decree of the senate, in the face of that august assembly. Fronto Catus replied to him with great solidity and spirit; as indeed the whole body of the senate conducted themselves in this affair with wonderful dignity. For those who opposed the petition of Varenus, when it was first brought before the house, thought, after it was granted, it ought not to be reversed. While the question indeed was under debate, every body, they imagined, was at liberty to give their sentiments; but when once settled by the majority, they looked upon it then to be the common concern of each member to support it. This was the general opinion of the whole house, Acilius Rufus only excepted, and seven or eight more with him: these indeed persevered in their former vote. Among which small party there were some whose occasional solemnity, or rather affectation of so-

* See b. 5. let. 20.

lemnity,

lemnity, was extremely ridiculed. You will judge from hence what a warm battle we are likely to have of it, since this prelude, as I may call it, has occasioned so much contention. Farewell.

Epist. XIV. PLINY to MAURICUS.

YOU invite me to Formianum. I will come, upon this condition only, that you put yourself to no inconvenience upon my account; a condition which I shall also strictly observe on my part. It is not the pleasures of your sea and your coast that I pursue; it is your company, together with ease and freedom from business, that I desire to enjoy; otherwise I might as well remain in Rome: for there is no medium worth accepting between giving up your time wholly to the disposal of others, or reserving it entirely in your own; at least for myself, I declare I cannot relish mixtures of any kind. Farewell.

Epist. XV. PLINY to ROMANUS.

YOU were not present at a very extraordinary occurrence which lately happened: nor was I a witness to it either, but I had an early account of it. Passienus Paulus an eminent Roman knight, and particularly conspicuous for his great learning, has a turn for elegiac poetry; a talent which runs in the family, for Propertius was his relation, as well as his countryman. He was lately reciting a poem which began thus:

Priscus, at thy command —

Whereupon Priscus, who happened to be present as a particular friend of the poet's, cried out — *But he is mistaken, I did not command him.* Think what a peal of laughter this occasioned. The intellects

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telleets of Priscus, you must know, are something suspicious; however, as he enters into the common offices of life, is called to consultations, and publicly acts as a lawyer, this behaviour was the more remarkable and ridiculous: and in truth Paulus was a good deal disconcerted by his friend's absurdity. Thus you see, it is not only necessary that an author who recites his works in public, should himself have a sound judgment, but that he takes care his audience have too. Farewell.

Epist. XVI. PLINY to TACITUS.

YOU desire that I should write you an account of my uncle's death, that you may be enabled to transmit a more exact relation of it to posterity. I return you thanks. For I foresee that if this accident shall be celebrated by your pen, the glory of it will be rendered for ever illustrious. And notwithstanding he perished by a misfortune, which, as it involved at the same time a most beautiful country in ruins, and destroyed so many populous cities, seems to promise him an everlasting remembrance; notwithstanding he has himself composed many and lasting works; yet I am persuaded, the mentioning of him in your immortal writings, will greatly contribute to eternize his name. Happy I esteem those to be, whom providence has distinguished with the abilities either of doing such actions as are worthy of being related, or of relating them in a manner worthy of being read; but doubly happy are they who are blessed with both these uncommon talents: in the number of which my uncle, as his own writings, and your history will evidently prove, may justly be ranked. It is with extreme willingness, therefore, I execute your commands; and should indeed have claimed the task if you had not enjoined it. He was at that time with the

fleet under his command at * Misenum. On the 24th of August, about one in the afternoon, my mother desired him to observe a cloud which appeared of a very unusual size and shape. He had just returned from taking the benefit of the sun, and after bathing himself in cold water, and taking a slight repast, was retired to his study: he immediately arose, and went out upon an eminence from whence he might more distinctly view this very uncommon appearance. It was not at that distance discernible from what mountain this cloud issued, but it was found afterwards to ascend from mount Vesuvius †. I cannot give you a more exact description of its figure, than by resembling it to that of a pine-tree, for it shot up a great height in the form of a trunk, which extended itself at the top into a sort of branches;

* In the gulf of Naples.

† About six miles distant from Naples. — This dreadful eruption happened A. D. 79, in the first year of the emperor Titus. Martial has a pretty epigram upon this subject, in which he gives us a view of Vesuvius, as it appeared before this terrible conflagration broke out:

*Here verdant vines o'erspread Vesuvio's sides;
The gen'rous grape here pour'd her purple tides.
This Bacchus lov'd beyond his native scene;
Here dancing satyrs joy'd to trip the green.
Far more than Sparta this in Venus' grace;
And great Alcides once renown'd the place:
Now flaming embers spread dire waste around,
And gods regret that gods can thus confound.*

Lib. 4. ep. 44.

It seems probable that this was the first eruption of mount Vesuvius, at least of any consequence; as it is certain we have no particular accounts of any preceding one. Dio, indeed, and other ancient authors speak of it as burning before; but still they describe it as covered with trees and vines, so that the eruptions must have been inconsiderable.

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occasioned, I imagine, either by a sudden gust of air that impelled it, the force of which decreased as it advanced upwards, or the cloud itself being pressed back again by its own weight, expanded in this manner: it appeared sometimes bright and sometimes dark and spotted, as it was either more or less impregnated with earth and cinders. This extraordinary phenomenon excited my uncle's philosophical curiosity to take a nearer view of it. He ordered a light vessel to be got ready, and gave me the liberty, if I thought proper, to attend him. I rather chose to continue my studies; for, as it happened, he had given me an employment of that kind. As he was coming out of the house, he received a note from Rectina the wife of Bassus, who was in the utmost alarm at the imminent danger which threatened her; for her villa being situated at the foot of mount Vesuvius, there was no way to escape but by sea: she earnestly entreated him therefore to come to her assistance. He accordingly changed his first design, and what he began with a philosophical, he pursued with an heroical turn of mind. He ordered the galleys to put to sea, and went himself on board with an intention of assisting not only Rectina, but several others; for the villas stand extremely thick upon that beautiful coast. When hastening to the place from whence others fled with the utmost terror, he steered his direct course to the point of danger, and with so much calmness and presence of mind, as to be able to make and dictate his observations upon the motion and figure of that dreadful scene. He was now so nigh the mountain, that the cinders, which grew thicker and hotter the nearer he approached, fell into the ships, together with pumice-stones, and black pieces of burning rock: they were likewise in danger not only of being aground by the sudden retreat of the sea, but also

from the vast fragments which rolled down from the mountain, and obstructed all the shore. Here he stopped to consider whether he should return back again; to which the pilot advising him, *Fortune*, said he, *befriends the brave; carry me to Pomponianus*. Pomponianus was then at Stabiae, separated by a gulf, which the sea, after several insensible windings, forms upon the shore. He had already sent his baggage on board; for though he was not at that time in actual danger, yet being within the view of it, and indeed extremely near, if it should in the least increase, he was determined to put to sea as soon as the wind should change. It was favourable, however, for carrying my uncle to Pomponianus, whom he found in the greatest consternation: he embraced him with tenderness, encouraging and exhorting him to keep up his spirits, and the more to dissipate his fears, he ordered, with an air of unconcern, the baths to be got ready; when, after having bathed, he sat down to supper with great cheerfulness, or at least (what is equally heroic) with all the appearance of it. In the mean while the eruption from mount Vesuvius flamed out in several places with much violence, which the darkness of the night contributed to render still more visible and dreadful. But my uncle, in order to sooth the apprehensions of his friend, assured him it was only the burning of the villages, which the country-people had abandoned to the flames: after this he retired to rest, and it is most certain he was so little discomposed as to fall into a deep sleep; for being pretty fat, and breathing hard, these who attended without actually heard him snore. The court which led to his apartment being now almost filled with stones and ashes, if he had continued there any time longer, it would have been impossible for him to have made his way out; it

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was thought proper therefore to awaken him. He got up, and went to Pomponianus and the rest of his company, who were not unconcerned enough to think of going to bed. They consulted together whether it would be most prudent to trust to the houses, which now shook from side to side with frequent and violent concussions; or fly to the open fields, where the calcined stones and cinders, though light indeed, yet fell in large showers, and threatened destruction. In this distress they resolved for the fields, as the less dangerous situation of the two: a resolution which, while the rest of the company were hurried into by their fears, my uncle embraced upon cool and deliberate consideration. They went out then, having pillows tied upon their heads with napkins; and this was their whole defence against the storm of stones that fell round them. It was now day every where else, but there a deeper darkness prevailed than in the most obscure night; which however was in some degree dissipated by torches and other lights of various kinds. They thought proper to go down further upon the shore to observe if they might safely put out to sea, but they found the waves still run extremely high and boisterous. There my uncle having drank a draught or two of cold water, threw himself down upon a cloth which was spread for him, when immediately the flames, and a strong smell of sulphur, which was the forerunner of them, dispersed the rest of the company, and obliged him to rise. He raised himself up with the assistance of two of his servants, and instantly fell down dead; suffocated, as I conjecture, by some gross and noxious vapour, having always had weak lungs, and frequently subject to a difficulty of breathing. As soon as it was light again, which was not till the third day after this melancholy accident, his body was found entire, and

without any marks of violence upon it, exactly in the same posture that he fell, and looking more like a man asleep than dead. During all this time my mother and I who were at Misenum — * But as this has no connection with your history, so your inquiry went no farther than concerning my uncle's death; with that therefore I will put an end to my letter: suffer me only to add, that I have faithfully related to you what I was either an eye-witness of myself, or received immediately after the accident happened, and before there was time to vary the truth. You will chuse out of this narrative such circumstances as shall be most suitable to your purpose: for there is a great difference between what is proper for a letter, and an history; between writing to a friend, and writing to the public. Farewell.

Epist. XVII. PLINY TO RESTITUTUS.

I Am not able to restrain the indignation I conceived, while I attended a friend of mine at his rehearsal; but must give vent to it in a letter, since I have no opportunity of doing so in person. The company was entertained with the recital of a very finished performance: but there were two or three persons among the audience, men of great genius in their own, and a few of their friends estimation, who sat like so many mutes, without so much as moving a lip or a hand, or once rising from their seats, even to shift their posture. But to what purpose, in the name of good sense, all this wondrous air of wisdom and solemnity, or rather indeed (to give it its true appellation) of this proud indolence? Is it not downright folly, or even madness, thus to be at the expense of a whole day merely to commit a

* See this account continued, let. 20. of this book.
piece

piece of rudeness, and leave him an enemy, whom you visited as a friend? Is a man conscious that he possesses a superior degree of eloquence than the person whom he attends upon on such an occasion? so much the rather ought he to guard against every appearance of envy, as a passion that always implies inferiority, where-ever it resides. But whatever a man's talent may be, whether greater or equal, or less than his friend's, still it is his interest to give him the approbation he deserves: if greater or equal; because the higher his glory rises whom you equal or excel, the more considerable yours must necessarily be: if less; because if one of more exalted abilities does not meet with applause, neither possibly can you. For my own part, I honour and revere all who discover any degree of merit in the painful and laborious art of oratory; for Eloquence is a high and haughty dame, who scorns to reside with those that despise her. But perhaps you are not of this opinion: yet who has a greater regard for this glorious science, or is a more candid judge of it than yourself? in confidence of which, I chose to vent my indignation particularly to you, as not doubting you would be the first to share with me in the same sentiments. Farewell.

Epist. XVIII. PLINY to SABINUS.

YOU desire me to undertake the public cause of the Firmiani. I will endeavour to do so, though I have many affairs upon my hands: for I should be extremely glad to oblige so illustrious a colony by my good offices, as well as to render you an acceptable service. How indeed can I refuse you any thing, who profess to have sought my friendship as your ornament and support, especially when your request is on behalf

behalf of your country? For what can be more worthy than the entreaties of a patriot, or more powerful than those of a friend? You may engage for me therefore to your, or rather as I should now call them, our friends the Firmiani. And though their own illustrious character did not persuade me that they deserve my care and patronage; yet I could not but conceive a very high notion of their merit, from seeing a man of your distinguished virtues rise up amongst them.

Epist. XIX. PLINY TO NEPOS.

HAVE you been informed that the price of lands is considerably risen, especially of those near Rome? This sudden advance was occasioned by a practice which has been much complained of, and which drew from the senate, at the last assembly for the election of magistrates, a very honourable decree, whereby the candidates for any office are prohibited from giving any treat, present, or money whatsoever. The two former of these abuses were practised with as little reserve as discretion; the latter, though carried on with more secrecy, was however equally notorious. Our friend Romulus, taking advantage of this favourable disposition of the senate, instead of giving his sentiments upon the point in debate, moved that the consuls might acquaint the emperor, it was unanimously desired to have this abuse reformed, and that they would address him to interpose his vigilance and authority for the redress of this evil, as he had for that of every other. The emperor was accordingly pleased to do so, and published an edict to restrain those infamous largesses; wherein he directs that no person shall be admitted as a candidate, who has not a third part of his estate in land; esteeming it highly indecent, (as no doubt it is), that those
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who aspire to dignities in the state, should look upon Rome and Italy, rather like travellers who are passing through it, than as their proper country. For this reason there is a general struggle among those who aim at any office, and they buy up every thing which they hear is to be sold; by which means the value of lands is greatly increased. If therefore you are inclined to dispose of any part of your estate here, or of making purchases elsewhere, you have now a good opportunity; for in order to buy in Italy, these candidates are obliged to sell their estates in the provinces. Farewell.

Epist. XX. PLINY TO CORNELIUS TACITUS.

YOU tell me, that the letter which, in compliance with your request, I wrote to you concerning the death of my uncle, has made you inquisitive to know not only what terrors, but what dangers I underwent while I continued at Misenum; for there, I think, the account in my former broke off:

Though my shock'd soul recoils, my tongue shall tell.

My uncle having left us, I pursued the studies which prevented my going with him, till it was time to bathe. After which I went to supper, and from thence to bed, where my sleep was greatly broken and disturbed. There had been for many days before some shocks of an earthquake, which the less surpris'd us as they are extremely frequent in Campania; but they were so particularly violent that night, that they not only shook every thing about us, but seem'd indeed to threaten total destruction. My mother flew to my chamber, where she found me rising, in order to awaken her. We went out into a small court belonging to the house, which separated

separated the sea from the buildings. As I was at that time but eighteen years of age, I know not whether I should call my behaviour in this dangerous juncture, courage or rashness; but I took up Livy, and amused myself with turning over that author, and even making extracts from him, as if all about me had been in full security. While we were in this posture, a friend of my uncle's, who was just come from Spain to pay him a visit, joined us, and observing me sitting by my mother with a book in my hand, greatly condemned her calmness, at the same time that he reproved me for my careless security: nevertheless I still went on with my author. Though it was now morning, the light was exceedingly faint and languid; the buildings all around us tottered, and though we stood upon open ground, yet as the place was narrow and confined, there was no remaining there without certain and great danger: we therefore resolved to quit the town. The people followed us in the utmost consternation, and (as to a mind distracted with terror, every suggestion seems more prudent than its own) pressed in great crowds about us in our way out. Being got at a convenient distance from the houses, we stood still, in the midst of a most dangerous and dreadful scene. The chariots which we had ordered to be drawn out, were so agitated backwards and forwards, though upon the most level ground, that we could not keep them steady, even by supporting them with large stones. The sea seemed to roll back upon itself, and to be driven from its banks by the convulsive motion of the earth; it is certain at least the shore was considerably enlarged, and several sea-animals were left upon it. On the other side, a black and dreadful cloud bursting with an igneous serpentine vapour, darted out a long train of fire, resembling flashes of lightning.

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lightning, but much larger. Upon this our Spanish friend, whom I mentioned above, addressing himself to my mother and me with greater warmth and earnestness: *If your brother and your uncle, said he, is safe, he certainly wishes you may be so too; but if he perished, it was his desire, no doubt, that you might both survive him: Why therefore do you delay your escape a moment?* We could never think of our own safety, we said, while we were uncertain of his. Hereupon our friend left us, and withdrew from the danger with the utmost precipitation. Soon afterwards, the cloud seemed to descend, and cover the whole ocean; as indeed it entirely hid the island of Caprea, and the promontory of Misenum. My mother strongly conjured me to make my escape at any rate, which, as I was young, I might easily do: as for herself, she said, her age and corpulency rendered all attempts of that sort impossible; however, she would willingly meet death, if she could have the satisfaction of seeing that she was not the occasion of mine. But I absolutely refused to leave her, and taking her by the hand, I led her on: she complied with great reluctance, and not without many reproaches to herself for retarding my flight. The ashes now began to fall upon us, though in no great quantity. I turned my head, and observed behind us a thick smoke, which came rolling after us like a torrent. I proposed while we had yet any light, to turn out of the high road, lest she should be pressed to death in the dark, by the croud that followed us. We had scarce stepped out of the path, when darkness overspread us, not like that of a cloudy night, or when there is no moon, but of a room when it is shut up, and all the lights extinct. Nothing then was to be heard but the shrieks of women, the screams of children, and the cries of men; some calling for their children,

children, others for their parents, others for their husbands, and only distinguishing each other by their voices; one lamenting his own fate, another that of his family; some wishing to die, from the very fear of dying, some lifting their hands to the gods; but the greater part imagining that the last and eternal night was come, which was to destroy both the * gods and the world together. Among these there were some who augmented the real terrors by imaginary ones, and made the frightened multitude falsely believe that Misenum was actually in flames. At length a glimmering light appeared, which we imagined to be rather the forerunner of an approaching burst of flames, (as in truth it was), than the return of day: however, the fire fell at a distance from us: then again we were immersed in thick darkness, and a heavy shower of ashes rained upon us, which we were obliged every now and then to shake off, otherwise we should have been crushed and buried in the heap. I might boast, that, during all this scene of horror, not a sigh or expression of fear escaped from me, had not my support been founded in that miserable, though strong consolation, that all mankind were involved in the same calamity, and that I imagined I was perishing with the world itself. At last, this dreadful darkness was dissipated by degrees, like a cloud or smoke; the real day returned, and even the sun appeared, though very faintly, and as when an eclipse is coming on. Every object that presented itself to our eyes (which were extremely weakened) seemed changed, being covered over with white

* The Stoic and Epicurean philosophers held, that the world was to be destroyed by fire, and all things fall again into original chaos; not excepting even the national gods themselves from the destruction of this general conflagration.

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* ashes, as with a deep snow. We returned to Misenum, where we refreshed ourselves as well as we could, and passed an anxious night between hope and fear; though, indeed, with a much larger share of the latter: for the earthquake still continued, while several enthusiastic people ran up and down heightening their own and their friends calamities by terrible predictions. However, my mother and I, notwithstanding the danger we had passed, and that which still threatened us, had no thoughts of leaving the place, till we should receive some account from my uncle. —

And now you will read this narrative without any view of inserting it in your history, of which it is by no means worthy; and indeed you must impute it to your own request, if it shall appear scarce to deserve even the trouble of a letter. Farewell.

Epist. XXI. PLINY TO CANINIUS.

I AM one of those who admire the ancients: yet I am very far from despising, as some affect to do, the genius of the moderns: nor can I suppose, that nature in these latter ages is so worn out, as to be incapable of any valuable production. On the contrary, I have lately had the pleasure of hearing Verginius Romanus read to a few select friends, a comedy so justly formed upon the plan of the ancients, that it may one day serve itself for a model. I know not whether he is in the number of your acquaintance; I am sure at least he deserves to be so, as he is greatly

* Mr Addison in his account of mount Vesuvio observed, that the air of the place is so very much impregnated with saltpetre, that one can scarce find a stone which has not the least white with it. *Travels*, 182.

distinguished by the probity of his manners, the elegance of his genius, and the variety of his productions. He has written some very agreeable pieces of the burlesque kind in Iambics, with much delicacy, wit, and humour, and I will add too, even eloquence; for every species of composition which is finished in its kind, may with propriety be termed eloquent. He has also composed some comedies after the manner of Menander and other approved authors of that age, which deserve to be ranked with those of Plautus and Terence. He has now, for the first time, attempted the ancient comedy, but in such a manner, as to shew he is a perfect master in this way. Strength, majesty, and delicacy, softness, poignancy, and wit, are the graces which shine out in this performance with full lustre. He represents virtuous characters with the highest distinction of honour, at the same time that he stigmatizes vicious ones with a noble indignation: whenever he makes use of feigned names, it is with great propriety, as he employs real ones with much justness. With respect only to myself, I should say he has erred through an excess of good-will, if I did not know that fiction is the privilege of poets. In a word, I will insist upon his letting me have the copy, that I may send it to you for your perusal, or rather that you may get it by heart; for I am well persuaded when you have once taken it up, you will not easily lay it aside. Farewell.

Epist. XXII. PLINY to TYRO.

A Great affair has lately been transacted here, which affects all who shall hereafter be appointed governors of provinces, as well as every man who too incautiously trusts his friends. Lustricus Bruttianus having detected his lieutenant

Montanus

Montanus Atticinus in several enormous crimes, informed the emperor of them. Atticinus, on the other hand, added to his guilt by commencing a groundless prosecution against the friend whose confidence he had abused. His information was received, and I was one of the assessors at this trial. Both parties pleaded their own cause, and in a summary way confined themselves closely to the articles of the charge: a method by much the shortest of discovering the truth. Brutianus, as a proof of the undeserved confidence he had reposed in his friend, and that nothing but absolute necessity could have extorted from him this complaint, produced his will, all in the hand-writing of Atticinus. He then proceeded to open his charge, and clearly proved him guilty of the most infamous conduct. Atticinus, after some vain efforts to justify himself, retired; but his defence appeared as weak, as his accusation was wicked. It was proved, that he had bribed a slave belonging to the secretary of Brutianus, and by that means got into his possession his register-book, which he erased, and then made this his villanous act the foundation of a charge against his friend. The emperor's conduct in this trial was extremely noble: without collecting the voices with respect to Brutianus, he proceeded immediately to take them only in relation to Atticinus, who was accordingly condemned to banishment. Brutianus was acquitted not only with a very full and honourable testimony of his integrity, but with the credit of having behaved in this affair with great resolution. And indeed, after having vindicated his own character in few words, he supported his charge against Atticinus with much spirit, and approved himself no less a man of fortitude than of worth and honesty. I send you this account not only as a caution for your behaviour in the

government you have obtained, and as a hint to depend upon yourself as much as possible, without relying too far upon your friends; but that you may be well assured, if you should happen to be imposed upon in the execution of your office (as far be it that you ever should), you will readily meet with satisfaction here. However, that you may stand in no need of it, let me entreat you to exert the utmost circumspection of your own vigilance; for the pleasure of being redressed, most certainly cannot compensate the uneasiness of being deceived. Farewell.

Epist. XXIII. PLINY TO TRIARIUS.

YOU earnestly desire me to be an advocate in a cause committed to your care, reputable in itself, and wherein the pleader may gain applause. I will comply with your request, but not without a fee. Is it possible, you will say, that my friend Pliny should be so mercenary? In truth it is; and I insist upon a reward which will do me more honour than the most disinterested patronage. I beg of you then, and indeed I make it a previous condition, that Crematius Ruso may be joined with me as counsel in this cause. This is a practice which I have frequently observed with respect to several distinguished youths; as I take infinite pleasure in introducing young men of merit to the bar, and assigning them over to fame. But if ever I owed this good office to any man, it is certainly to Ruso, not only upon account of his family, but his tender affection to me; and it would afford me a very singular satisfaction to have an opportunity of seeing him draw the attention of the audience in the same court and the same cause with myself. This I now ask as an obligation to me; but when he has pleaded in your cause, you will esteem it as a favour

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favour done to you: for I will be answerable that he shall acquit himself in a manner equal to your wishes, as well as to my hopes and the importance of the cause. He is a youth of a most excellent disposition, and when once I shall have produced his merit, we shall soon see him exert the same generous office in forwarding that of others; as indeed no man without the support and encouragement of friends, and having proper opportunities thrown in his way, is able to rise at once from obscurity, by the brightness of his own unassisted genius.

Epist. XXIV. PLINY to MACER.

OF how much importance to an action is the station of the person who performs it! For the very same conduct shall be either greatly magnified, or entirely overlooked, as it happens to proceed from a person of conspicuous or obscure rank. I was sailing lately upon our lake, with an old man of my acquaintance, who desired me to observe a villa situated upon its banks, which had a chamber hanging over the water. From that room, said he, a woman of our city threw herself and her husband. Upon inquiring into the cause, he informed me, "That her husband having been long afflicted with an ulcer in those parts which modesty conceals, she prevailed with him at last to let her inspect the sore, assuring him at the same time, that she would most sincerely give her opinion whether there was a possibility of its being cured. Accordingly, upon viewing the ulcer, she found there was no hopes, and therefore advised him to put an end to his life: to which she not only encouraged him by her example, but was actually the means of his death; for tying herself to her husband, she plunged with him in-

“to the lake.” Though this happened in the very city where I was born, I never heard it mentioned before; and yet that this action is less taken notice of than that famous one of Arria’s *, is not because it was less remarkable, but because the person who performed it was more obscure. Farewell.

Epist. XXV. PLINY to HISPANUS.

YOU write me, that Robustus, a Roman knight of great distinction, undertook a journey, in company with my friend Attilius Scaurus, as far as Oriculum, since which time he has never been heard of. In compliance, therefore, with your desire, I shall send for Scaurus, in order to see if he can give us any light in tracing him out; though I fear, indeed, it will be to no purpose. I suspect an accident of the same unaccountable kind has attended Robustus, as formerly happened to my townsman Metilius Crispus. I procured a company for him in the army, and gave him when he set out 40,000 sesterces for his equipage: but I never received any letter from him afterwards, or could learn what became of him. Whether he was murdered by his servants, or together with them, is uncertain; however, neither he nor they ever appeared more. I wish we may not find it thus with respect to Robustus; nevertheless I shall send for Scaurus. I cannot refuse this either to your generous request, or the very laudable entreaties of that most excellent youth his son, who discovers as much good sense in the method, as he does filial affection in the zeal of his inquiry: and may we have the same success in finding his father, as he has had in discovering the person that accompanied him! Farewell.

* See an account of her, b. 3. let. 16.

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Epist. XXVI. PLINY to SERVIANUS.

I Rejoice, and congratulate you, that you design your daughter for Fuscus Salinator. His family is patrician, his father is in high reputation; his mother is held in equal esteem. As for himself, he is studious, learned, and eloquent, and, with all the innocence of a child, unites the sprightliness of youth to the wisdom of age. I am not, believe me, deceived by my affection, when I give him this character; for though I love him, I confess, beyond measure, (as his friendship and esteem for me well deserve), yet partiality has no share in my judgment; on the contrary, the stronger my fondness of him is, the more rigorously I weigh his merit. I will venture then to assure you (and I speak it upon my own experience) you could not have formed to your wish a more accomplished son-in-law. May he soon present you with a grandson, who shall be the exact copy of his father! and with what pleasure shall I receive from the arms of two such friends their children or grandchildren, whom I shall claim a sort of right to embrace as my own! Farewell.

Epist. XXVII. PLINY to SEVERUS.

YOU desire me, as you are appointed consul elect *, to consider in what manner you

* The consuls, though they were chosen in August, did not enter upon their office till the first of January; during which interval they were styled *Consules designati*, consuls elect. It was usual for them upon that occasion to compliment the emperor, by whose appointment, after the dissolution of the republican government, they were chosen.

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are to frame the speech which you intend in honour of the emperor. It is much easier, amidst that variety of topics which the virtues of this illustrious prince abundantly supply, to find materials for encomium, than to select them. However, I will send you my sentiments, or (what I rather chuse) I will give them to you in person, after having laid before you the difficulties which occur to me. I am doubtful then whether I should advise you to pursue the method, which I observed myself on the same occasion. When I was consul elect, I avoided running into the usual strain of compliment, which however far (as far certainly it would have been) from adulation, might yet bear the semblance of it. Not that I affected an uncommon spirit of freedom; but as well knowing the sentiments of our amiable prince, and being thoroughly persuaded, that the highest praise I could offer to him, would be to shew the world I was under no necessity of paying him any. When I reflected what profusion of honours had been heaped upon the very worst of his predecessors, nothing, I imagined, could more distinguish a prince of his real virtues, from those infamous emperors, than to address him in a different manner. And this I thought proper to observe in my speech, lest it might be suspected I passed over his glorious acts, not out of judgment, but inattention. Such was the method I then observed; but I am sensible the same measures are neither agreeable, nor indeed suitable to all alike. Besides the propriety of doing or omitting a thing depends not only upon persons, but time and circumstances; and as the late actions of our illustrious prince afford materials for panegyric, no less just than recent and magnificent, I doubt (as I said before) whether I should persuade you to act in this case as I did myself. In this, however, I am clear, that it

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Epist. XXVIII. PLINY TO QUADRATUS.

I AM not unacquainted with the reason that prevented your attending my arrival in Campania. But absent as you were, might I have judged by the vast quantity of provisions of all sorts with which I was supplied by your orders, I should have imagined you had conveyed yourself hither with your whole possessions. I must own I was so arrant a clown, as to take all that was offered me; however, it was in compliance with the solicitations of your people, and fearing you would chide both them and me if I refused. But for the future, if you will not observe some measure, I must. And accordingly I assured your servants, if ever they were thus profuse in their bounty to me again, I would absolutely return the whole. You will tell me, I know, that I ought to consider every thing belonging to you, as entirely mine. I am extremely sensible of that; and therefore I would use them with the same moderation as my own. Farewell.

Epist. XXIX. PLINY TO QUADRATUS.

A Vidiſius Quietus, who loved me with a singular affection, and (which gave me equal pleasure) approved of my conduct, used frequently to repeat this maxim, among others, of Thrasea's, with whom he was intimately acquainted; That "there are three sorts of causes which we ought to undertake; those of our friends, those of the deserted, and those which tend to public example." The reason we should engage in the cause of our friends requires no explanation; but the deserted have a claim to our assistance, because

because it shews a resolute and generous mind ; as we ought to rise in the cause where example is concerned, since it is of the last consequence whether a good or evil one prevails. To which I will add (perhaps in the spirit of ambition, however I will add) those of the splendid and illustrious kind. For it is reasonable, no doubt, sometimes to plead the cause of glory and fame, or in other words one's own. These are the limits (since you ask my sentiments) I would prescribe to a person of your dignity and moderation. Practice, I know, is generally esteemed, and in truth is, the best guide in the art of pleading. I have seen many who with small genius and no erudition have, merely by that single means, arrived to a good proficiency. Nevertheless, the observation of Pollio, or at least what usually passes for his, I have found by experience to be most true : " A good address at the bar," said he, " occasioned me much practice; and, on the other hand, much practice spoiled my address." The reason is, by too frequent a repetition it becomes rather a habit than a talent, and degenerates into a rash assurance, rather than settles into a just confidence. Accordingly we see that the great modesty of Isocrates, which, together with the weakness of his voice, prevented his appearing in public, did not by any means obstruct his attaining the character of a consummate orator. Let me farther advise you, to read and write, and meditate much, that you may be able to speak whenever you chuse ; and you never will chuse it, I well know, but when you ought. That at least is the restriction I laid down to myself. I have sometimes indeed pleaded, not so much from the single motive of reason, as necessity, (which, however, is the same thing), having on some occasions been appointed counsel by order of the senate ; but it was in cases

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which fell within Thrasea's third rule, that is, of the exemplary kind. I was advocate for the province of Bœtica, against Bæbius Massa; where the question being, whether they should be allowed to prosecute him, it passed in the affirmative. I appeared for them a second time against Cæcilius Classicus, and the point in debate was, whether the provincial officers who acted under him in his proconsulship, should be deemed accomplices with him? It was determined they should; and they were punished accordingly. I was counsel against Marius Priscus, who having been convicted of bribery, endeavoured to take advantage of the lenity of the law in that case, the penalty of which was by no means adequate to his enormous guilt: but he was sentenced to banishment. I defended Julius Bassus in an affair in which he acted imprudently, it is true, but not in the least with any ill intention: the matter was referred to the ordinary judges, and he was permitted in the mean while to retain his seat in the senate. I pleaded likewise not long since, on behalf of Varenus, who petitioned for leave to examine witnesses on his part; which was granted him. And now I will only wish, that I may, for the future, have such causes enjoined me by authority, in which it will become me to appear by choice. Farewell.

Epist. XXX. PLINY TO FABATUS.

I AM under an obligation, most certainly, to celebrate your birthday as my own, since all the happiness of mine arises from yours, to whose care and diligence it is owing, that I am cheerful in town and easy in the country.—Your Camillian villa in Campania has suffered by the injuries of time, and is falling into decay; however, the most valuable parts of the building either remain entire,

entire, or are but slightly damaged, and it shall be my care to see it put into thorough repair.— Though I flatter myself I have many friends, yet scarce any, I doubt, of the sort you inquire after, and which the affair you mention demands. All mine lie among those whose employments engage them in town; whereas the conduct of country-business requires a person of a rough cast, and enured to labour, who will not look upon the office as mean, and can submit to a solitary life. The opinion you have of Rufus is suitable to one, distinguished as he was, by the friendship of your son, but what service he can be of to us upon this occasion, I know not; though I am well persuaded, he will rejoice to have it in his power to do us any. Farewell.

Epist. XXXI. PLINY to CORNELIANUS.

HAVING been lately summoned by Cæsar as one of his assessors to Centumcellæ (as it is now called), I received the most exquisite entertainment there. Could any thing indeed afford a higher pleasure, than to see the emperor exercising his justice, his wisdom, and his affability, even in retirement, where those virtues are most observable? Various were the points brought in judgment before him, and which proved, in so many different instances, the great abilities of the judge. The cause of Claudius Ariston came on first. He is an Ephesian nobleman, of great munificence and unambitious popularity, whose virtues having rendered him obnoxious to a set of people of far different characters, they had spirited up an informer against him, of the same infamous stamp with themselves; but he was honourably acquitted. The next day, the cause of Gallita, accused of adultery, was determined. Her husband, who is a military tribune, was upon the point of offering

ing himself as a candidate for certain honours at Rome, but she had disgraced both him and herself by an intrigue with a centurion. The husband informed the consul's lieutenant, who wrote to the emperor concerning it. Cæsar, having examined the proofs, broke the centurion, and sentenced him to banishment. It remained that some punishment should be inflicted likewise upon the other party, as it is a crime of which both must necessarily be equally guilty. But the husband's affection for his wife inclined him to drop that part of the prosecution, not without some suspicion of connivance; for he continued to live with her even after he had commenced this prosecution, contenting himself, it should seem, with having removed his rival. But he was ordered to proceed in the suit: which though he did with great reluctance, it was necessary, however, she should be condemned. And she accordingly was, being given up to the punishment directed by the Julian law. The emperor thought proper to specify, in his decree, the name and office of the centurion, that it might appear he passed it in virtue of military discipline; lest it should be imagined he claimed a particular cognisance in every cause of the same nature. The third day was employed in examining into an affair which had occasioned much and various speculation; it was concerning the will of Julius Tiro, part of which was plainly genuine, the other part, it was said, was forged. The persons accused of this fraud were Sempronius Senecio, a Roman knight, and Eurythmus, Cæsar's freedman and procurator. The heirs jointly petitioned the emperor, when he was in Dacia, that he would reserve to himself the trial of this cause; to which he accordingly consented. At his return from that expedition, he appointed a day for the hearing; and when some of the heirs,

as in respect to Eurythmus, offered to withdraw the suit, the emperor nobly replied, *He is not Polycletus, nor am I Nero.* However, he indulged the petitioners with an adjournment, and the time being expired, he now sat to hear the cause. Two of the heirs appeared, and desired, that either their whole number might be compelled to plead, as they had all joined in the information, or that they also might have leave to desist. Cæsar spoke with great wisdom and moderation; and when the counsel on the part of Senecio and Eurythmus said, that unless their clients were heard, they would remain under the suspicion of guilt. *I am not concerned,* said the emperor, *what suspicions they may lie under, it is I that am suspected;* and then turning to us, *Advise me,* said he, *how to act in this affair, for you see they complain that I do not give them leave to withdraw their suit.* At length, by the advice of the council, he ordered notice to be given to the heirs, that they should either go on with the cause, or each of them justify their reasons for not doing so; otherwise that he would pass sentence upon them as calumniators. Thus you see how usefully and seriously we spent our time, which however was intermixed with diversions of the most agreeable kind. We were every day invited to Cæsar's table, which, for so great a prince, was spread with much plainness and simplicity. There we were either entertained with interludes, or passed the night in the most pleasing conversation. When we took our leave of him the last day, he made each of us presents; so studious is he to exert the benevolence of his temper upon all occasions! As for myself, I was not only charmed with the dignity and wisdom of the judge, the honour done to the assessors, the ease and unrestrained freedom of the conversation, but with the agreeable situation of the place. This delightful villa

villa is surrounded by the most verdant meadows, and commands a fine view of the sea, which forms itself here into a spacious harbour, in the figure of an amphitheatre. The left hand of this port is defended by exceeding strong works, as they are now actually employed in carrying on the same on the opposite side. An artificial island, which is rising in the mouth of the harbour, will break the force of the waves, and afford a safe passage to ships on each side. In order for the construction of this wonderful instance of art, stones of a most enormous size are transported hither in a sort of pontoons, and being thrown one upon the other, are fixed by their own weight, gradually accumulating in the manner, as it were, of a sand-bank. It already lifts its rocky back above the ocean, while the waves which beat upon it, being tossed to an immense height, foam with a prodigious noise, and whiten all the sea round. To these stones are added large piles, which in time will give it the appearance of a natural island. This haven is to be called by the name of its great author, and will prove of infinite benefit, by affording a very secure retreat to ships on that extensive and dangerous coast. Farewell.

Epist. XXXII. PLINY to QUINTILIAN.

THough you are extremely moderate in your desires, and have bestowed an education on your daughter * suitable to your own character, and

* This letter has been generally supposed to be addressed to the famous Quintilian, author of that excellent treatise upon oratory, which is still extant. But there are very strong reasons to believe, that either there is some error in the title, or that it is ad-

and that of Tutilius her grandfather; yet as she is going to be married to a person of so great distinction as Nonius Celer, whose station requires a certain splendour of living, it will be necessary to consider the rank of her husband in her cloaths and equipage: circumstances which though they do not augment our real dignity, yet certainly adorn and grace it. But as I am sensible your fortune is not equal to the greatness of your mind, I claim to myself a part of your expense, and, like another father, present the young lady with fifty thousand sesterces. The sum should be larger, but that I am well persuaded the smallness of the present is the only consideration that can prevail with your modesty not to refuse it. Farewell.

dressed to another person of the same name. Quintilian in the opening of his sixth b. *de Inst. Orat.* takes occasion to mention his family, where he is lamenting to his friend Victorius the loss of his eldest son, which had just then happened. He takes notice at the same time of the deaths of his wife and younger son; and, after some very pathetic reflections, closes the whole with this observation: *Nos miseri, sicut facultates patrimonii nostri, ita hoc opus aliis paramus, aliis relinquemus.* This preface may be considered then as his domestic history. But he does not give the least hint of a daughter: which seems difficult to be accounted for upon any other reason than that he never had one. For if she was dead, it is highly natural to imagine he would have deplored the loss of her among that of the rest of his children. If she was living, how could he lament the necessity of leaving his patrimony to strangers? or if she was unworthy of his tenderness, why does he not complain of that unhappiness among his other misfortunes? Vid. *Traduct. de Quint.* par l'Abbé Gedoy, in the preface.

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Epist. XXXIII. PLINY to ROMANUS.

Way, says Vulcan, *cease your works begun.*
 Thus whether you are engaged in reading or writing, away with your books and papers, and take up my divine oration, as those Cyclops did the arms of Æneas. Now tell me, could I introduce my speech to you with an air of more assurance? But in good earnest, I put it into your hands as the best of my performances *; for it is myself only that I pretend to rival. It was spoken in defence of Accia Variola; and the dignity of the person interested in it, the singularity of the occasion, together with the majesty of the tribunal, conspire to render it extremely remarkable. Figure to yourself a lady ennobled not only by her birth, but her marriage to a person of prætorian rank, disinherited by her father, and suing for her patrimony in the centumviral court, within eleven days after this old man, seized with a fit of love when he was fourscore years of age, had brought home a mother-in-law to his daughter. Imagine the solemnity of a court of justice, composed of one hundred and eighty judges, (for that is the number of which it consists); friends innumerable attended on both parties; the benches infinitely thronged, and a deep circle of people encompassing the judges, at the same time that numbers pressed round the tribunal; even the very galleries lined with men and women, hanging over with the greatest earnestness, (who though they might see tolerably well, it was scarce possible for them to hear a word); represent to yourself, in short, fathers, daughters, and mo-

* Sidonius Apollinaris says, that Pliny acquired more honour by this speech, even than by his incomparable panegyric upon Trajan.

thers-in-law, all deeply interesting themselves in the event of this important trial. The sentiments of the judges were divided, two of the courts being for us, and two against us. It is something remarkable, that the same question debated before the same judges, and pleaded by the same advocates, and at the same time, should happen to receive so different a decision, that one would almost imagine it was more than accident. However, in the final event, the mother-in-law, who claimed under the will a sixth part of the inheritance, lost her cause. Suberinus * was also excluded his pretensions; who though he was disinherited by his father, without daring to vindicate his own patrimony, had yet the singular assurance to demand that of another. I have been thus particular in giving you a detail of the circumstances which attended this cause, not only that my letter might inform you of what you could not learn by my speech; but also (for I will honestly own the artifice) in order to your reading it with more pleasure, by being thus introduced, as it were, into the audience. And extensive as this pleading is, I do not despair of its recommending itself to you, as much as if it had the grace of brevity. The abundance of matter, the just order in which it is placed, the little narrations that are distributed throughout, together with the variety of the style, will always give it an air of novelty. I will even venture to say to you (what I durst not to any one else), that a spirit of great fire and sublimity breaks out in many parts of it, at the same time that in others it is wrought up with much delicacy and closeness of reasoning. I was frequently obliged

* This Suberinus (the commentators suppose) was son to the woman whom Accia's father had married in his old age.

to intermix dry computations with the elevated and pathetic, and to descend from the orator almost to the accountant; so that you will sometimes imagine the scene was changed from the solemnity of the centumviral tribunal, to that of a private and inferior one. I gave a loose to my indignation, my resentment, and my compassion; and, in steering through this illustrious cause, was governed by turns with every varying gust of the passions. In a word, my particular friends look upon this speech (and I will venture to repeat it again) as my best performance, esteeming it the * Ctesiphon of my orations: whether with reason or not, you will easily judge, who have them all so perfectly in your memory, as to be able, while you are reading this, to compare it with my former, without the trouble of turning to them. Farewell.

Epist. XXXIV. PLINY to MAXIMUS.

YOU acted right in promising an entertainment of gladiators to our good friends the citizens of Verona, not only as they have long since distinguished you with their peculiar esteem and veneration; but as it was from thence also you received that amiable object of your most tender affection, your late excellent wife. And since you owed some monument or public shew to her memory, what other spectacle could you have exhibited more proper to the † occasion? besides,

* An oration of Demosthenes in defence of Ctesiphon, esteemed the best of that noble orator's speeches.

† It was an opinion which unhappily prevailed in the ancient Pagan world, that the ghosts of the deceased were rendered propitious by human blood.

This

besides, you were so unanimously pressed to do so, that to have refused, would have had the appearance rather of obstinacy than resolution. The readiness with which you granted this request, and the * magnificent manner in which you performed it, is much to your honour ; for a greatness of soul is seen in these smaller instances, as well as in matters of higher moment. I am sorry the African panthers, which you had largely provided for this purpose, did not arrive time enough ; but though they were delayed by the tempestuous season, the obligation to you is equally the same, since it was not your fault that they were not exhibited. Farewell.

This absurd notion gave rise to these barbarous gladiatorial combats, which at first were only exhibited at funeral obsequies, and none but criminals were appointed to those mortal encounters. But in process of time they became part of the public entertainments, and persons were trained up on purpose for these inhuman shews.

* The amphitheatre in which these shews were exhibited, is still to be seen in Verona, whose inside is the most entire of any now in being. It is computed to have room to contain upwards of three and twenty thousand spectators to sit commodiously. •

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.

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